

THE  
PLEASANT HISTORY [2.]  
OF

Thomas of Reading,

OR,

The six worthy Yeomen of the West.

Corrected and enlarged by T. D.



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# The pleasant Historie of the six worthy Yeomen of the West.



In the daies of King Henry the first, who was the first King that instituted the high Court of Parliament, there lived nine men, which for the trade of Clothing, were famous throughout all England. Which Art in those daies was held in high reputation, both in respect of the great riches that thereby was gotten, as also of the benefit it brought to the whole Common-wealth: the younger sons of Nobles & Gentlemen, to whom their Fathers would leaue no lands, were most commonly preferred to learne this trade, to the end that thereby they might liue in good estate, and thus forth their daies in prosperitie.

Among all Crafts this was the onely chiefe, for that it was the greatest merchandize, by the which our Country became famous throughout all Nations: and it was verily thought, that the one halfe of the people in the land lived in those daies thereby, and in such good sort, that in the common-wealth there were few or no beggars at all: poore people whom God lightly blessed with most children, did by meanes of this occupation so order them, that by the time that they were come to be six or seven yeeres of age, they were able to get their owne bread: Idleness was banished our coast, so that it was a rare thing to heare of a thiefe in those daies. Therefore it was not without cause that Clothiers were then both honoured and loued, among whom these nine persons in this Kings daies were of great credit, viz. Tho. Cole of Reading, Gray of Gloucester, Sutton of Salisbury, Fitzallen of Worcester, (commonly called William of Worcester) Tom Doue of Worcester, and Simon of South Hampton, alias Supbroth: who were by the King called, The six worthy Husbands of the West. When were there three living in the North, that is to

## The pleasant Historie

by, **C**hauncelour of the Duchie, Hodgkins of Wallingford, & Martin Bryan of Spanchett. Every one of these kept a great number of servants at worke, spinners, carders, weavers, fullers, dyers, shearmen, and rewer, to the great admiration of all those that came into their houses to behold them.

**N**ow you shall understand, these gallant Clothiers, by reason of these dwelling places, separated themselves in three severall companies: Gray of Gloucester, William of Worcester and Thomas of Reading, because their journey to London was all one way, they conversed commonly together: And Dore of Excester, Sutton of Salisbury, and Simon of Southampton, they in like sort kept company the one with the other, meeting ever all together at Basingstoke: and the third Northerne Clothiers to the like, who commonly did not meet till they came to Bosomes Anne in London.

**M**oreover, for the lone and delight that these Westerne men had each in others companie, they did so provide, that their waies and their times would ever meet upon a day in London at Iarrats Hall, surnamed the Wyant: for that he surpassed all other men of that age, both in stature & strength: whose merriments and memorable deeds, I will set downe unto you in this following discourse.

How King *Henry* sought the fauour of all his subjects, especially of the Clothiers. Chap. I.

**T**his King *Henry*, who for his great learning and wisdom was called Beaularke, being the third son to the renowned Conquerour: after the death of his brother William Rufus, took upon him the government of this Land in the absence of his elder brother Robert Duke of Normandie, who at this time was at wars amongst the Infidels, and was chosen King of Jerusalem the which he for the lone he bare to his owne Countrey, refused, and with great honour returned from the holy Land of whose comming when King *Henry* understood, knowing he would make claime to the Crowne, sought by all means possible to winne the love will of his Nobility, and to get the fauour of the Commons by cour-

tels.

of Thomas of Reading.

tells: so; the obtaining whereof he did them many fauours, thereby the better to strengthen himself against his brother.

It chanced on a time, as he, with one of his sonnes, and others of his Nobilitie, rode from London towards Wales, to appease the fury of the Welshmen, which then began to raise themselves in armes against his authoritie, that he met with a great number of Welshmen laden with cloth, coming to London, and seeing them still dye one after another so many together, demanded whose they were: the Maine men answered in this sort: Coles of Reading (quoth they) When by and by the King asked another saying: whose cloth is all this? Olde Coles, quoth he: and againe anon after he asked the same question of others, & still they answered, Olde Coles. And it is to be remembred, that the King met them in such a place so narrow and streight, that he with the rest of his traine, were faine to stand close to the hedge, whilst the carts passed by, the which at that time being in number aboue two hundred, was nere hand an houre ere the King could gett come to be gone: so that by this long stay, he began to be displeased, although the admiration of that sight did much qualifie his furie; but breaking out in discontent. by reason of his stay, he said, I thought Olde Cole had got a Commission for all the carts in the Country to carry his cloth. And how if he haue (quoth one of the Welshmen) doth that g. else you good sir? Yes, good sir, said our King. what say you to that? The fellow seeing the King (in asking that question) to bend his browes, though he knew not what he was, yet being abasht, he answered thus: Why sir if you be angry, no body can hinder you; say possible sir you haue anger at commandement. The King seeing him in uttering of his words to quare and quake, laugh't heartily at him, as wel in respect of his simple answer, as at his feare: and so fone after the last waime went by, which gave present passage vnto him and his Nobles and the earl on entering into communication of the commoditie of clothing, the King gave order at his home retourne to haue olde Cole brought before his Ma. tie, to the intent he might haue conference with him, not making him to be a subject of reent

## The pleasant History

abstiner but by that time he came within a mile of *Stanes* he met another company of waimes in like sort laden with cloth, whereby the King was dyliu into a further admiration: and demanding whose they were, answer was made in this sort: They be good-man Suttons of *Salisbury*, god be: and by that time a score of them were past, he asked again, saying: whose are these; Suttons of *Salisbury*, qu. they, and so still, as often as the King asked that question, they answered, Suttons of *Salisbury*. God send me many such Suttons, said the King. And thus the farther he travelled westward, more waimes and more he met continually: upon which occasion he said to his Nobles, That it would neuer greeue a King to die for the defence of a fertile Countre and faithfull subjects. I alwayes thought (quoth he) that *Englands* balour was more then her wealth, yet now I see her wealth sufficient to maintain her valour, which I will take to cherishe in all I may, & with my sword keepe my selfe in possession of that I haue. Kings and Louers can beake no partners: and therefore let my Brother Robert thinke, that although he was Heire to *England* by birth, yet I am King by possession. All his fauourers I must account my foes, and will serue them as I did the vngratefull Earle of *Hereford*, whose lands I haue seized, and banisht his body. But now we will leaue the King to his tourney into *Wales*, and waiting his home returne, in the meane time tell you the meeting of these folly Clothiers at *London*.

How *William* of Worcester, *Gray* of Gloucester, and old *Cole* of Reading, met all together at Reading, & of their communication by the way as they rode to *London*. Chap. 3.

**V**Vhen *Gray* of Gloucester, and *William* of Worcester were come to Reading, according to their custome, they alwayes called old *Cole* to haue his companie to *London*, who also duely attended their coming, hauing prouided a good beakefast for them: and when they had well refreshed themselves, they tooke their horses and rode on towards the Citie: and in their journey *William* of Worcester

of Thomas of Reading.

After asked them if they had not heard of the Earle of Moraigne his escape out of the Land: What is he fled, qd. Gray? I muse much at this matter, being in such great regard with the King as he was: but I pray you, doe you not know the cause of his going, qd. Cole? The common report, quoth Gray, is this, that the conetous Earle, who throught a grady desire, neuer left begging of the King for one thing or other, and his request being now denied him, of mere obstinacy & willfull forwardnesse hath banished himselfe out of the Land, & quite forsaken the Country of Cornwall, hauing made a vow neuer to set foot within England againe, and as report goeth, he with the late banisht Earle of Shrewsbury, haue ioynded themselves with Robert Duke of Bormandy, against the King, the which action of theirs hath inflamed the Kings wrath, that their Ladies with their children are quite turned out of dowryes succourlesse and friendlesse, so that it is told me, they wander by and downe the Country like forlorne people, and although many doe pity them, yet se we doe releue them.

A lamentable hearing, qd. William of Worcester, and with that casting their eyes asidde, they espied Tom Dove with the rest of his companions some riding to mete them, who as sone as they were come thither, fell into such pleasant discourses, as did shorten the long way they had to Coleborne; where alwayes at their coming towards London they dined; and being once entred into their Inn, according to old custome, good chere was prouided for them: for these Clothers were the chiefest guests that trauelled along the way: and this was as sure as an act of Parliament, that Tom Dove could not digest his meat without muske, nor drinke wine without women. so that his hostesse being a merry wench, would oftentimes call in two or thre of her neighbours wiues to keepe him company, when ere they parted they were made as pleasant as bees. And this being a continuall custome amongst them when they came thither, at length the womens husbands beganne to take exceptions at their wiues going thither: whereupon great controuersie grew betwixt them, in such sort, that when they were most restrained

## The pleasant History

restrained, then they had most desire to worke their wills : now gip quoth they, must we be so tyed to our taste, that we may not : iinke with our friends : He He, vpon these yello w hose, will no other die serue your turne : haue we thus long bin your wiues, and doe you now mistrust vs verily you eate too much salt, and that makes you grow cholericke, badde li- uers iudge all others the like, but in faith you shall not bryde vs so like asses, but we will goe to our freinds, when we are sent for, and doe you what you can. Well, quoth their hus- bands, if you be so head strong, we will tame you: it is the du- ty of honest women to obey their husbands saying. And of honest men (quoth they) to thinke well of their wiues; but who doe sooner impeach their credit, then their husbands, charging them, if they doe but smile, that they are subtil; and if they doe but winke, they account them wily; if sa) of countenance, then sullen: if they be forward, then they are counted strutting: and they if they be gentle: if a woman kepe her house. then you will say she is melancholy, if she walke abroad, then you call her a gadder; a Whorlaine, if she be precise; and a wanton, if she be pleasant: so there is no woman in the world that knowes how to please you: that we thinke our selues accurst to be married wiues, liuing with so many woes. These men, of whose company you forwarne vs, are (so) ought that euer we saw) both honest and cour- teous, and in wealth farre beyond our selues: then what rea- son is there, why we should restraime to visit them? Is their good will so much to be requited with scorne, that their cost may not be counteruailed with our company? If a woman be disposed to play light of loue, alas, alas, doe you thinke that you can puenient her? May we will abhorre it, that the re- straint of liberty inforces women to be letted: for where a wo- man cannot be trusted, she cannot thinke her self beloued, and if not beloued, what cause hath she to care for such a one? therefore husbands, reforme your opinions & doe not worke your owne faues with our discredit. The Clothiers, we tell you, are folly fellows, and but in respect of our courtship, they would scorne our company.



of Thomas of Reading.

The men hearing their wives so well to plead for themselves knew not how to answer, but said, they would put the burden on their consciences, if they dealt unjustly with them, and so left them to their owne wills. The women having thus conquered their husbands conceits, would not leave the favour of their friends for frownes, and as above the rest Tom Dove was the most pleasantest, so was he had in most reputation both the women, who for his sake made this Song:

Welcome to towne, *Tom Dove, Tom Dove,*  
The merriest man alive,  
Thy company still we love, we love,  
God graunt thee well to thrive,  
And never will depart from thee,  
For better or worse, my ioy,  
For thou shalt still haue our good will,  
Gods blessing on my sweet boy.

This song went by and downe through the whole Country and at length became a dance among the common sort, so that Tom Dove, for his mirth and good fellowship, was famous in euery place. Now when they came to London, they were welcome to the East Iarrat the Gyant, & as soon as they were alighted, they were saluted by the merchants, who waited their coming thither, and alwayes prepared for them a costly supper, where they commonly made their bargain, and upon euery bargain made, they still vsed to send some tokens to the Clothiers wives. The next morning they went to the hal, where they met the Northern Clothiers, who greeted one another in this sort. What, my Masters of the West, well met: what chere? what chere? Euen the best chere our merchants could make vs, (quoth Gray.) Then you could not chuse but fare well, quoth Hodgekins: & you be weary of our company, adieu, quoth Surton: Not so, said Martin, but shall we not haue a game ere we goe? Yes sayth for an hundred pounds. Well said, old Cole, said they: and with that Cole and Gray went to the Dice with Martin and Hodgekins; and the Dice running on Hodgekins side, Coles money began to waste. Now by the spall, quoth Cole, my money strikes as

## The pleasant History

had as s. ortherne cloth. When they had played long, Gray kept to it, and recouered againe the money that Cole had lost. But while they were thus playing, the rest being delighted in contrary matters, euery man satisfied his owne humour.

Tom Doue called for musticke, William of Worcester for wine, Sutton set his delight in hearing merry tales, Simon of Southhamton got him into the kitchin, and to the pottage pot he goes, for he esteemed moze a messe of pottage, then of a t. nison pasty. So w. sir, Cutbert of Kendall was of another mind, for no meate pleased him so well as mutton, such as was laced in a red petticoate. And you shall vnderstand, that alwaies when they went to dice, they got into Bosomes 3. one which was so called of his name that kept it, who being a soule roben, went alwayes with his nose in his bosome, and one hand in his pocket, the other on his staffe, figuring sozth a description of cold winter, for he alwayes wore two coates & two caps, & two or thre paire of stockings, and a high paire of shoes, ouer the which he drew on a great paire of lined slippers, and yet would he oft complaine of cold: wherefore of all men generally he was called Old Bosome, and his house Bosomes nine.

This lump of cold ice had lately married a young wiffe, who was as wiffy as she was wanton, and in her company Old Cutbert onely delight, and the better to make passage to his loue, he would often thus commune with her: 3. mase, good wiffe, quoth he. Good wiffe, quoth she: Worthy sir, in mine opinion there is none good but God, and therefore call me Mistresse. Then said Cutbert, Faire Mistris, I haue often mused, that you being a proper woman, could find in your heart for to match with such a greazle Carle as this, an euill mannered mase, a foule lump of kitchin-stuffe, and such an one as is indeede a scozne of men; how can you like him that all women mislike: or loue such a loathsome creature: me thinks verily it should grieve you to lend him a kisse, much moze to lie with him. Indeede sir, quoth she, I had but hard fortune in this respect, but my friends would haue it so, & truly my liking and my loue toward him are like, he neuer had the one, nor neuer



of Thomas of Reading.

uer shall get the other: yet I may say to you, befoze I married him, there were diuers proper young men that were intozs vnto me, who loued me as their liues, and glad was he that could get my company: those were my golden daies, to where in my pleasure abounded, but these peeres of care and grieve, wher in my sorowes excēde. Now no man regards me, no man cares for mee, and albeit in secret they might beare me god-will, yet who dares shew it? and this is a double grieve, he carries ouer me so zealous a minde, that I cannot looke at a man, but presently he accuseth me of inconstancy, although (I protest) without cause.

And in troth so. Cutbert he shoulde haue cause to complaine for some what, were I as you, as sure as I liue, and so he shall, quoth she, if he doe not change his byas. Cutbert hearing her say so, began to grow further in requesting her fauor, wishing he might be her seruant and secret friend, and the better to obtaine his desire, he gaue her diuers gifts, in somuch that she began something to listen vnto him: and albeit she liked well of his speeches, yet would she blame him, and take him by very short sometimes for the same, till in the end, Cutbert thewed himselfe to be desperate, saying he would dye to winne himselfe rather than liue in her disdaine. O my sweet heart not so, quoth she, God forbid I should be the death of any man: Comfort thy selfe, kind Cutbert, and take this kisse in token of further kindnesse, and if thou wilt haue my fauour, thou must be wise and circumspect, and in my husbands sight I would alwaies haue thee to stand fault with my doings, blame my bad husbandle, displease my person, and take exceptions at euery thing, whereby he will be as well pleased, as Simon of South-hampton with a messe of pottage.

Deare distressed, quoth he, I will fulfill your charge to the uttermost, so that you will not take my test in earnest. She answered, Thy sourest speeches I will esteeme the fairest, and take euery displeasse to be a praise to thee, turning each word to the contrary: and so for this time adieu, god Curb. for supper time drawes nere, it is met for me to take to my meat. With that docton comes old Bosome, calling his wiffe, saying,

## The pleasant History

Ho Winifred, is supper ready: they have done playing aboue:  
 therefore let the Chamberlaine couer the Table. By & by hus-  
 band, qd. she, it shall be done straight way. Ho now my pa-  
 sters, who wins, qd. Cutbert? Our money walkes to the West,  
 qd. Martin: Cole hath won 40. pounds of me, and Gray hath  
 gossen well: the best is qd. Hodgekins, they will pay for our  
 supper. then let vs haue good stoze of sack, qd. Sutton. Content  
 sayd Cole, for I promise you, I shal not to grow rich by  
 Dice playing, therefore call for what you will, I will pay for  
 all. yea saie Simon! Chamberlain, I pray thes bying a whole  
 pottle of pottage for me. Ho Tom Dove had all the Rolers  
 at a becke of his finger, which follow him by & to tyme the Ci-  
 ty, as diligent as little Chickens after a hen, and made a dole,  
 that there should want no spucke. And at that time there  
 liued in London a spuckian of great reputation, named Rejor,  
 who kept his seruants in such costly garments, that they  
 might seme to come before any prince. Their coates were  
 all of one colour; and it is sayd, that afterward the probillity  
 of this, and, noting it for a seemely sight, used in like manner  
 to keepe their men all in one livery. This Rejor was the  
 most skillfullest spuckian that liued at that time, whose  
 wealth was very great, so that all the instruments wheron  
 his seruants playd, were richly garnished with Rabbes of sil-  
 uer, and some gold: the bowes belonging to their violins  
 were all likewise of pure silver: there was also for his wife  
 some called to great Office in the City, who also builded (at  
 his owne cost) the Hospitall of St. Bartholme in  
 Smithfield. His seruants being the best comfords in the City,  
 were by Tom Dove appointed to play before the young pri-  
 ces. Then supper being brought to the board, they all sat down  
 and by and by after comes vp their Maister, who toke his place  
 among them: and anon after, the good wife in a red pellicote  
 & a wastcoate, comes among them as white as a Lilly, saying  
 my Pasters, you are welcome, I pray you be merry. Thus  
 talking close to their meate, when they had well fed, they found  
 leasure to talke one with another: at what time Cuth. began  
 thus to find fault, y wis, my Maister, quoth he, you haue a wife  
huswife

of Thomas of Reading

but wille to your wille, here is meate back of a new fashion :  
 God sends meate, and the diuell sends care. Why by what allee  
 the meate, quoth he, serves it not your turnes? better men  
 than your selfe are content withall, but a paillie companion  
 is euer way to please. Away, you stutty thing, qu. Cutbert  
 your husband hath a stout Jewell of you : I maruell such a  
 graue ancient man would match himselfe with such a young  
 giglot that hath as much handfomnes in her, as god hath wis-  
 dy, which is lust nothing at all. Well sir, sayd she, in regard  
 of my husbands presence : I am loth to aggrauate anger, other-  
 wisse I would tell thee thy owne. Goe so, what needs all this,  
 quoth the company : in god faith, Cutbert, you are to blame,  
 you find fault where none is. Thus I must speake my minde,  
 quoth Cutbert, I cannot dissemble, I trust the god man  
 thynkes neuer the worse of me : so I haue his god wille, what  
 the soule will saye I for his wille. Enough, quoth Tom  
 Doy, but he with good che remone these babbles, we meane  
 to be merry, and not melancholy. I her sayd old Cole, now  
 trust me, Cutbert, we will haue your Daffesse and your friends  
 ere we part : here woman I vntike to you, and regard not  
 his wordes, for he is babbling where soeuer he comes. Quoth  
 the woman, Nothing grieues me so much, as that he should  
 thus openly checke me : if he had found any thing amisse, he  
 might haue spied a better time to tell me of it than now,  
 yf he had not thrust my bad huswifery into my husbands  
 beag. I liue not so quietly with him, God wot : and with  
 that she wept. Come Cutbert, quoth they, take to her, and  
 shake hands and be friends. Come on, you puling baggage,  
 quoth he, I vntike to you, here will you pledge me and shake  
 hands. Go, (quoth she) I will sa thee choakt first, shake  
 hands with thee : I will shake hands with thee as well as thou.  
 Quoth sayd her husband, you shall shake hands with him  
 then : If you will not shake hands, ye shall shake you : what, you  
 young busshesse. Well, husband, sayd she, it becomess a woman  
 to obey her husband, in regard whereof, I vntike to him. What  
 well sayd, quoth the company : so she toke her leaue & went  
 do home, And within a while after they paid the shot, and depar-

## The pleasant Historie

ted thence to Iarrais Hall, where they went to their lodging; and the next day they took their way homeward all together: and coming to Colebysh, they took up their lodging: and it was Coles custome to selluer his money to the good wife of the house to kepe it till morning, which in the end turned to his bitter destruction, as hereafter shall be shewed.

How *Grays* wife of Gloucester, with one or two more of her neighbours went to the Faire, where servants came to be hired, & how she tooke the Earle of Shrewesburies Daughter into her service, Chap. 3.

**I**T was wont to be an old custome in Gloucestershire, that at a certaine time in the yere, all such young men and Maids as were out of service, resorted to a Faire that was kept nere Gloucester, there to be ready for any that would come to hire them, the young men on all one side in the one side, and the maidens on the other. It came to passe, that the Earle of Shrewesburies daughter, whose father was lately banished, being driven into great distresse, and weary with travell, as one whose delicate life was neuer bred to such toyle, sat her downe vpon the high-way side, making this lamentation:

O false and deceitfull world, quoth she: who is in thee that wishes not to bee rid of thee, for thy extremities are great: Thou art deceitfull to all, and trusty to none. Fortune is thy treasurer, who is like thy selfe, wauering and vncoustant, she setteth vp tyrants, beateth downe kings: giueth health to some, and reuolue to others: Fortune giueth these ruffs and we see it not: with her hands she toucheth vs, & we see it not: she treades vs vnder foot, and we know it not: she speaks in our eares, and we heare her not: she cries aloud, and we understand her not: And why? because we know her not, vntill misery doth make her manifest.

Al my deare father, well maist thou doe. Of all misfortunes it is most vnhappy to be fortunate: and by this misfortune came my fall. Was ever good I any brought to this extremitie? What is become of my rare Jewels, my rich aray, my sumptu,

## of Thomas of Reading.

sumptuous fare, my waiting seruants, my many friends, and all my vaine pleasures: my pleasure is banisht by displeasure, my friends fled like foes, my seruants gone, my feasting turned to fasting, my rich array consumed to ragges, and my iewels decke out my chiefeest enemies: therefore of all things the meeneſt ſtate is beſt, pouerty with ſurety, is better then honour mixed with feare: ſeing God hath allotted me to this miſery of life, I will frame my heart to embrace humilitie, and carry a mind anſwerable to my miſfortunes, ſic on this vaine title of a wiſhip, how little doth it auaile the diſtreſſed: So, no, I muſt therefore forget my birth and parentage, and think no more on fathers houſe, where I was wont to bee ſerued, now will I learne to ſerue, and plaine Meg ſhall be my name, god Lord grant I may get a good ſeruite, nay any ſeruiſe ſhall ſerue, where I may haue meat, drinke, and apparell. So he had no ſoner ſpoken theſe wordes, but the ſped a couple of maſdens more comming to waras her; who were going to the faire: and bidding her good morrow, asked her if ſhe went to the faire. Per mary qu. ſhe, I am a poore mans child that is out of ſeruite, and I heare that at the ſtatute ſolkes doe come of purpoſe to hire ſeruants. True it is, ſaid the ſpaldens and thiſther goe we ſo; the ſame purpoſe, and would be glad of your company. Will ſhe god will, and I am right glad of yours, ſaid ſhe, beſe thing you good ſpaldens, you will doe me the fauour, to tell me what ſeruite were beſt for me: for the more ſo blame my parents, they would neuer put me forth to know any thing. Well by what can you doe (quoth the ſpaldens?) can you bryew and bake, make butter and cheſe, and reape corne well: So verily, ſaid Margaret, but I would be right glad to learne to doe any thing whatſoeuer it be. If you could ſpin or card, ſaid another, you might doe excellent well with a Clothier, for they are the beſt ſeruites that I know, there you ſhall be ſure to fare well and ſo liue merrily.

Then Margaret wept, ſaying, alas, what ſhall I doe? I was neuer brought vp to theſe things. What, can you doe nothing, quoth they? So truely (quoth ſhe) that is good for any thing, but I can read and wytte, and ſowe, ſome ſkill I haue in my noble,

needie, and a little on my Life: but this, I fe will profit me nothing. Good Lord, quoth they, are you bakild? we shal neuer heare of a spais before that could read and write. And although you can doe no other thing, yet possibly you may get a seruile, if you can behane your selfe manerly. I pray you go another, saying you are bakild, will you doe so much as to reade a loub letter that is sent me? for I was at a friends of mine with it, and he was not at home, and so I know not what is writ. I pray you let me se it, quoth Margaret, and I will shew you, and hereupon she reade as followeth.

**O** Lenny my ioy, I die for thy loue,  
And now I heare say that thou dost remove,  
And therefore, Lenny, I pray thee recite,  
Where shall I meete thee soone at night.

For why, with my Master no more will I stay,  
But for thy loue I will riuine away:  
O Lenny, Lenny, thou puttast me to paine;  
That thou no longer wilt here remaine.

I will weare out my shooes of Neats-leather,  
But thou and I will meete together;  
And in spite of Fortune, Rat, or Moule,  
We will dwell together in one house.

For who doth not esteeme of thee,  
Shall haue no seruice done of me;  
Therefore good Lenny haue a care,  
To meet poore Fragment at the faire.

Now alas good soule (quoth Lenny) I thinke he be the kindest yongman, in the world. The rest answered, that he se med no telle, and surely it appeareth that he is a pretty wilty fellow, quoth one of them, how finely he hath written his letter in iune, trust me; I will giue you a good thing, and let me haue a copy of it to send to my sweet-heart: that you shall with all my heart; & so comming to the faire, they toke vp their standing



of Thomas of Reading.

Within a while after, good wife Gray of Gloucester came thither to see her selfe of divers commodities: and when she had bought what she would, she told her neighbour she had great need of a maid-servant of swaine: therefore good she, good neighbour goe with me, and let me haue your opinion. With a good will, said her neighbour, and together they went, and looking and viewing the maidens ouer, there toke speciall notice of Margaret. Welcome me, quoth she, there stands a very proper maiden, and one of a modest and comely countenance. Verily, said her neighbour, so she is, as euery I look'd vpon.

The gooden seeing them to view her so well, was so abashed, that a scarlet colour overspread her lilly cheeks, which the woman perceiving, came vnto her, and asked if she were willing to serue. The maid with a low curtsey, and a most gentle speech, answered, it was the onely cause of her coming. Can you spinne of card, said good wife Gray? Truly Dame, said she, though my cunning therein be but small, my good will to learne is great, and I trust, my diligence shall content you. What wages will you take, quoth good wife Gray? I will referre that, said Margaret, to your conscience and curtsey, desiring no more than what I shall deserue. Then asking what Country-woman she was, the maiden wept saying: Ah good dame, I was vntimely borne in Shropshire, of poore parents, and yet not so needy as vnfortunate, but death hauing ended their sorowes, hath left me to the cruelty of these enuious times, to finish my Parents Tragedy with my troubles. What, maiden good dame, haue you a care to doe your business, and to liue in Gods feare, and you shall haue no care to regard fortunes froiues, and so they went home together.

Now, so soone as the good man saw her, hee asked his wife where she had that maiden: she said at the Faire. Why then quoth he, thou hast brought all the faire away, and I doubt it were better for vs, to send the faire to another Towne, then to keepe the faire here. Why man, quoth she, what meane you by that? Whom man, I meane this, that she will pson a Load-stone, to draw the hearts of all my men after her, & so we shall haue wife sentce done of all wdes. Then said his wife, I hope

## The pleasant History

husband, Margaret will have a better care both to her owne credit, and our commonalty then so, and so let her alone to looke to such matters. As thy name Margaret quoth her gaffer: proper is thy name to thy person, for thou art a pearle in thy aspect, and rich in beauty.

His wife hearing him say so, began to change her opinion: What husband quoth she in the inward of that dojer. Begyn you to like your maid so wel? I doubt I had most need to looke to your selfe. He forsooke her, I had rather than an angel. I had chosen some other, but heere you maide, you shall pache hence, I will not nor will I make in my bosome, and therefore get you gon, I will none of you, provide a service where you may.

The maiden hearing her say so, fell downe on her knees, and besought her, saying, O sweet dame, be not so cruell to me to turne me out of doores, now alas, I know not where to goe, or what to doe, if you forsake me. Let not the fading beauty of my face displease me of your favour: for rather then that shall hinder my service, let my knife shall some blemish my face, and I will banish beauty as my greivous enemy. And with that, her abundant teares stopped her speech, that she could not utter one word more.

The woman seeing this, could not forbear any longer, nor could her gaffer stay in the room for weeping. Well Margaret, said her dame (little knowing that she had kneled before her) using thy selfe well, I will keepe thee and thou shalt have my good-will if thou governe thy selfe with wisdome, & so he sent her about her busynesse. Her husband coming to supper said, How now wisse art thou so doubtfull of me, that thou hast put away thy maiden? I wis (quoth she) you are a wise man, to stand praisling of a maidens beauty before her face: & you a wise woman, quoth he, to grow jealous without a cause. So to supper they went, and because Margaret she used her selfe of fassh behaviour above the rest, she was appointed to waite on the table. And it is to be understood, that Gray did never eate his meat alone, but still had some of his neighbours with him before whom he called his maid, saying, Margaret, come hither. Now because there was another of the same

name



name in the house, she made answer, I call not you master-  
quoth he, but Margaret with the lilly-white hand. After which  
time she was ever called so.

How the Kings Maiestie sent for the Clothiers, and of the  
fundry fauours which he did them. Chap. 4.

**K**ing Henry prouiding for his voyage into France, against  
King Lewis and Robert Duke of Normandie his owne  
brother, committed the Government of the Realme in his  
absence, to the Bishop of Salisbury, a man of great wis-  
dome and learning, whom the King esteemes highly, and af-  
terward he thought god to send for the cheefe Clothiers of  
England, who according to the Kings appointment came to  
the Court, and hauing licence to come befoze his Maiestie, he  
spake to this effect.

The strength of a King is the loue and friendship of his  
people, and he gouernes ouer his Realme most surely, that  
ruleth iustice with mercy, for he ought to feare many, whom  
many doe feare: therefore the Governours of the Common-  
wealth ought to obserue two especiall precepts: the one is that  
they to maintaine the profit of the Commons, that whatsoeuer  
in their calling they doe, they referre it thereunto: the other,  
that they be alwayes as well carefull ouer the whole Com-  
mon wealth, as ouer any part thereof, lest while they uphold  
the one, the other be brought to bitter decay.

And soasmuch as I doe vnderstand, and haue partly seene,  
that you the Clothiers of England are no small benefit to the  
weale publike, I thought it good to knowe from your owne  
mouthes, if there be any thing not yet granted that may bene-  
fit you or any other thing to be remoned that doth hurt you.

The greates desire I haue to maintaine you in your trades,  
with muned me hereunto. Therefore holdly say what you  
would haue in the one thing or the other, I will grant it you.

Wherupon, they all fell downe vpon their knees, and be-  
stred God to saue his Maiestie, and withall, requested thre  
dayes tyme to put in their answers: which was graunted.  
And thereupon they departed.

## The pleasant History

When the Clothiers had well considered of these matters, at length they thought meet to request of his Majesty for their first benefit, that all the Clooth measures throught the Land might be of one length, whereas to their great disadvantage before, every good towne had a severall measure the difficulty thereof was such, that they could not keepe them in memozy, nor know how to keepe their reckonings. He sent thing whereof they found themselves grieved, was this, that the people would not take crackt money, though it were neuer so good silver: whereupon it came to passe, that the Clothiers and others others, receiving great summes of money doe take among it much crackt money, it served them to no use, because it would not goe current, but lay upon their hands without profit or benefit. Wherof they prayed reformation. The thirde was a grieffe, whereof Hodgekins of Walslar complained, and that was, That whereas the Towne of Walslar lived altogether upon Cloathing, and by the reason of false borderers, and other evill minded persons, they were oft robbed, and had their Clothes carried out of their shels, where they were dying. That it would please his Majesty to grant the Towne this privilege. That whatsoever he was that was taken stealing their Clooth, might presently without any further trial be hanged up. When the day of their appearance approached, the Clothiers came before the King, and delivered by their Petition in writing, which his Majesty most graciously perusing, sayd, he was ready to fulfill their request: and therefore for the first point of their Petition, he called for a staffe to be brought him, and measuring thereupon the just length of his owne arme, delivered it to the Clothiers, saying, This measure shall be called a yard, and no other measure throughout all the Realme of England, shall be used for the same, and by this shall all men buy and sell, and we will so provide, that whosoever be that use any our statutes by any false measure, that hee shall not onely pay a fine for the same to the King, but also have his body punished by imprisonment. And as concerning the second point of your Petition, because of my sudden departure out of the Land, I know

of Thomas of Reading.

know not better how to ease you of your griefe (of crackt money) this Decree I make, because they account crackt money not currant, I say, none shall be currant but crackt money. And therefore, I will give present charge, that all the money thozow the Land shall be slit, and so you shall suffer no losse.

But now for your last request for the Towne of Lealsfar: where by thine own Clothes are so often stolne from you, seeing the Lawes already provided in that case, are not sufficient to keepe men in awe, it is indeede high time to haue sharper punishment for them.

With that Hodgekins unmannerly interrupted the King, saying in broad Northern speech, so eu gude faith, mai I leag, the saule soule of mansoule: gif any thing will keepe them whitt, at, till the harles be vanged by the cragge. All that the Duke care they for buying their eyne, sea long as they may goe groping by any doctore the Country like saule lizar toynes, begging and crackting:

The King smiling to heare this rough-betwofellow make this reply: Content the Hodgekins, for we will haue redress for all: and albeit that hanging of men was neuer seene in England, yet seeing the corrupt world is growne moze bold in all wickednesse, I thinke meete and mete to ordaine this death for such malefactors: and peculiarly to the Towne of Lealsfar I give this p'rovidence: That whosoever they finde stealing their Cloth, being taken with the goods, that without further iudgement they shall be hanged vp.

Thus (said our King) I haue granted what you request, and if hereafter you find any other thing that may be good for you, it shall be granted; for no longer would I desire to lue among you, than I haue care for the good of the Commonwealth: at which words ended the King rose from his royall Throne, while the Clothiers on their knees prayed for both his health, and happy success, and he bowed himselfe most thankfull for his dignities fauour. His Maestie bending his body towards them said that at his home returne, he would by the grace of God visit them.

## The pleasant History

How the Clothiers had provided a sumptuous feast for the Kings sonnes, prince William and Prince Robert, at Garrards Hall: shewing also what chance befell Cutberr of Kendall at that same instant. Cha. 5.

**T**he Clothiers departing from the Court in a merry mood  
joyfull of their good success, each one to other praised and  
magnified the Kings great wisdom and vertue, commen-  
ding also his affability and gentle disposition, so that Hodge-  
kins affirmed on his faith, that hee had rather speake to the  
Kings spawle, then to many Iustices of peace. Indeede (saith  
Cole) he is a most wise and merittfull Prince, and I pray  
God he may long reigne over us. Amen saith the rest.

Then saith Cole, my spawlers, shall we forget the great com-  
messe of the Kings sonnes, those sweet and gentle Princes that  
still shew vs favour in our suffer: in my opinion, it were rea-  
son to gratifie them in some sort, that we may not bitterly be  
condemned of ingratitude: wherefoze (if you thinke good) we  
will prepare a banquet for them at our Dast Garrard, who as  
you know, hath a faire house, and goodly rooms. Besides, the  
man himselfe is of a most courteous mind, a good behabour,  
sufficient to entertaine a Prince: his wife also is a dainty fine  
Coke: all which considered, I know not a fitter place in  
London. This true, quoth Sutton, and if the rest be content, I  
am pleased it shall be so. At this they all answered, yea, say  
quoth they, it will not be passing forty shillings a peice, and  
that we shall recover in our crackt money.

Being thus agreed, the feast was prepared. Tom Done,  
quoth they, we will commit the providing of musick to thee:  
and I, saith Cole, will invite viuers of our merchants and their  
wives to the same. That is well remembred, saith Gray. Up-  
on this they called to their Dast and Dastard, the being these  
determination, who most willingly said, all thing should be  
made ready, but I would haue two daies liberty, saith the good  
wife, to prepare my house and other things. Content saith the  
Clothiers, in the meane space we will bid our guests, and dis-  
patch

of Thomas of Reading.

patch our other affaires. But Simon of Southhampton charged his hostesse, that in any case she should not forget to make good store of potage. It shall be done quoth she.

It is to be remembred, that while this preparation was in hand, that Curb. of Kenball had not forgot his kindnes to his Wastesse of Bosomes Ynne. Wherefore finding time convenient when her husband was oversetring his bay-makers, he greeted her in this sort, sweet hostesse, though I were the last time I was in to wne, our bold with you, yet I hope it was not so offensive to you as you made thew for. Bold, my Curbert, quoth she, thou hast volwed thy selfe my servant; and so being, you are not to be blamed for doing what I wold you. By my honesty, I could not chuse but smile to my selfe, so soon as I was out of their sight, to thinke how prettily you began to bizzable. But now, quoth he, we will change our chidings to kissing, and it becometh me that these cherry lipps should be subject to such a Looke as thy husband.

Subject to him, quoth she: In faith sir no, I will haue my lips at as much liberty as my tongue, the one to say what I like, & the other to touch whom I like: In troth, shall I tel thee, Curbert, the charls breath smels so strong, that I care as much for kissing of him, as for looking on him: It is such a misshapen miser, and such a bundle of beastlinesse, that I can neuer thinke on him without spitting. He upon him, would my friends had carried me to my grave, when they went with me to the Church, to make him my husband. And so shedding a few dissembling teares, she stopt. What, my sweet mistresse (quoth he) weepe you: say it doone by my doo, and I will sing thee one of my Countrey Jigges to make thee merry. What thou in faith (quoth she) yes verily, said Curbert: and in troth, quoth she, if you sell a singing, I will sing with you. What is well, you can so suddenly change your note, quoth Curbert; then haue at it.

Man. | Omg haue I lou'd this bonny Lasse,  
Yet durst not shew the same.

Wom. Therein you p:one your selfe an Ass,

Man. I Was the more to blame.

Yet.

# The pleasant Historie

Yet still will I remaine to thee,  
Trang dilly do, trang dilly;  
Thy friend and loue secretly

Wom. Thou art my owne sweet bully.

Ma. But when shall I enioy the  
delight of thy faire loue?

Wom. Euen when thou seest that fortune doth,  
all maner lets remoue.

Man. O, I will fold thee in my armes,  
Trang dilly do, trang dilly,  
And keepe thee so from sudden harmes,

Wom. Thou art my owne sweet bully.

Wom. My husband he is gone from home,  
you know it very well.

Man. But when will he returne againe?

Wom. In truth I cannot tell.

If long he keepe him out of sight,  
Trang dilly do, trang dilly.  
Be sure thou shalt haue thy delight.

Man. Thou thou art bonny lassie.

While they were singing this song, her husband being out  
a sudden come home, and secretly in a corner and heard all,  
and blessing himselfe with both his hands, said, O abomina-  
ble dissimulation, monstrous hypocrisse, and are you in this hu-  
mour: can you be so together and sing together? Well quod  
hee, I will let them alone, so lea a little more of their kinane-  
ry. Neuer did Cat watch spouse so narrowly, as I will  
watch them: And so going into the kitchen, he asked his wife  
if it were not dinner time. Euen by and by, husband (quoth  
she) the meat will be ready. Presently after comes in Hodge-  
kins and Martin, who straight asked for Cutbert of Hendall,  
Answer was made, that he was in his chamber. So when  
they had called him, they went to dinner: then they requested  
that their Wasse and Wassele would sit with them.

Husband, said she, you may goe if you please: but as for me, I  
will

of Thomas of Reading.

will desire pardon. **May**, god-wife, goe vp saide her husband. **What** woman, you must beare with your guests. **Why** husband, quoth she, doe you thinke that any can beare the stirrs and stomps, which that **Godtherne** like gaue me the last time he was in towne: now **God** forgive me, I had as liue for the diuell as to see him: therefore god husband goe up your selfe, & let me alone, for in faith, I shall neuer abide that **Jacke** while I liue. **Upon** these wordes a way went her husband, & though he said little, he thought the more. **Now** when he came vp, his guests had him welcome. I pray you sit downe, god mine **Dast**, quoth they, where is your wife: what, will she sit with vs: **So** verily saide he, the wretched woman hath taken sure a displeasure against **Cuthbert**, that she sweares she will neuer come in his company. Is it so, saide the other: then trust me we are all well agreed: and I sweare by my fathers sale, quoth he, that were it not more good will to you, then loue to her, I would neuer come to your house more. I beleeue it well, saide old **Bosome**. And so with other communication they droue out the time, till dinner was ended.

After they were risen, **Martin** & **Hodgekins** got them forth about their affaires, but **Cuthb.** took his **Dast** by the hand, saying, **My** **Dast**, I leaue talke with your wife: for my part I thought we had bin friends: but seeing her stomache is so big, & her heart so great, I will see what she will say to me; and with that he slept into the kitchen, saying, **God** speed you **Dastis**, it must be when you are a way then, saide she. **What** is your reason, saide the other: **Because** **God** neuer comes where knaues are present. **By** godly braggle tale, quoth he, had I such a wife, I would present her fallow-face to the diuell for a candle. **With** that she bent her browes, & like a Fury of hell began to rise at him, saying, **Why** you gag-tooth **Jacke**, you blinking companion, get thee out of my kitchen quickly, or with my powdered be-se-broth, I will make your pate as bald as a Fryers.

**Get** me gone, quoth he: thou shalt not bid me twice: out you darty heales, you will make your husbands haire growe thorow his hood I doubt: and with that he got him into the **Dast**, and sat him downe on the bench by his **Dast**, to whom



## The pleasant History

he: 'Tis pittie, my Daff', that your aged yeres that loues quietnesse, should be troubled with such a scolding queane. **I**, God helpe me, God helpe, quoth the old man, and so went towards the stable: which his wife watching, suddenly kept out and gaue Cuthbert a kisse.

With in an houre after, the old man craftily called for his Page to ride to field: but as soone as he was gone, Cuthbert and his Daffesse were such good friends, that they got into one of the Ware-houses, and lockt the doze to them: but her husband hauing set a spie for the purpose, suddenly turned backe, & called for a capcase which lay in the Ware-house. The seruant could not finde the key by any meanes. Whereupon he called to haue the locke broke open. Which they within hearing, opened the doze of their owne accord. So soone as her husband espied her in that place, with admiration he said: A passion of my heart, what doe you here? what you two that cannot abide one an other? what make you so close together? is your chiding and rapling, brawling, and bzauling, come to this? what dissemblers are these! Whyp my Daff, qd. Cuthbert, what need you take the matter so hot? I gaue a Cheese to my Country-man Hodgekins, to lay by, and deliuer it to your wife to be kept; and then is it not reason, that she should come & seeke me my Cheese? I quoth the old man, belike the doze was lockt, because the Cheese should not run away. The doze said his wife vnknewe to us clapt to it selfe, and hauing a spring locke, was presently fast. Well, husband, qd. he, I will giue you as much credit as a Crocodile, but as for your companion, I will teach him to come hither to looke Cheeses. And with that he caused his men to take him presently, and to bind him hand and foot. Which being done they bore him by in a basket into the smoky lower of the hall, and there they did let him hang all that night, euen till the next day dinner time, when he should haue bene at the banquet with the Princess: for neither Hodgekins nor Martin could intreate their friendes to let him downe.

And in such a heate was hee broken with beating him by, that he was faine to cast off his gownes, his coates, and two-  
patre



of Thomas of Reading.

paire of his stockings, to cole himselfe, making a bow he should hang there seuen yeres, except the things sons came in person to beg his pardon, which most of all giued Cur. Whē Cole and the rest of the westerne women heard herof, they could not chuse but laugh, to thinke that he was taken sardy.

The yong Princes hauing giuen promise to be with the clothiers, kept their houre but when all the rest went to giue them entertainment, Simon was so buisie strapping his pottage, that he could not spare so much tyme. Which when the Princes saw, with a smiling countenance they said, Sup Simon ther's good booth: or else bestiew our Daffesse, quoth he, neuer looking behind him to see who spake, till the Prince clapt him on the shoulder. But good Lord, how blanke he was when he spied them, knowing not how to excuse the matter.

Well, the Princes hauing ended their banquet, Jarrat comes and with one of his hands toke the table of firsene fote long, quille from the ground ouer their heads from befoze the Princes, and set it on the other side of the hall, to the great adntration of all them that beheld it.

The Princes being then ready to depart, the Clothiers moued them in pleasant manner, to be good to one of their company, that shd neither sit, lye, nor stand. Then he must needs hang, qd. the Princes. And so be doth, most excellent Princes quoth they; and therewithall told them the whole matter. When they heard the story, down to Bosomes Iune they goe, where looking vp in the rose, spied yere Cutbert pinned vp in a basket, and almost smoaked to death, who although he were greatly ashamed, yet most pittifullly desired that they would get him release.

What is his trespass said the Prince: Nothing if it shal like your Grace, qd. he, but for looking for a chesse: But he could not finde it w<sup>th</sup>hout my wife, said the good-man: the villain had lately dined w<sup>th</sup> mutton, and could not direct his meate without chesse, for which cause I haue made him fast these twenty houres, to the end he may haue a better stomack to eate his dinner, then to vse dalliance.

Let me entreat you quoth the Prince, to release him: and if

## The pleasant History

euere hereafter you catch him in the coyne, clappe him in the poind. Your Grace shall request or command any thing at my hand, saie the old man: and so Cutbert was let downe vnder bound, but when he was loose, he vowed neuer to come with-in that house moze. And it is saide, the old man Bosome ordained, that in remembrance of this deed, euery yeere once, all such as came thither to aske for chaises, should be so serued: which thing is to this day kept.

How *Simons* wife of Southampton, being wholly bent to pride and pleasure, requested her Husband to see London, which being granted, how she got good wife *Sutton* of Salisbury to goe with her, who tooke *Crab* to goe along with them, and how he prophecied of many things. Chap. 6.

**T**He Clothiers being all come from London, *Suttons* wife of South-hampton, who was with her husband very merry and pleasant, brake her mind vnto him in this sort:

Good husband, will you neuer be so kind as let me goe to London with you? shall I be pend vp in South-hampton, like a parrot in a cage, or a Capon in a coope? I would request no moze of you in lieu of my paines, carke and care, but to haue one weeke time to see that faire City: what is this life, if it be not mixt with some delight? and what delight is moze pleasing than to see the fashions and manners of vnknoone places? Therefore good husband, if thou louest me, deny not this simple request. you know I am no comon gadder, nor haue oft troubled you with trauell. God knowes, this may be the last thing that euere I shall request at your hands.

Woman, quoth he, I would willingly satisfie your desire, but you knowe it is not convenient for both of vs to be abroad, our charge is so great, and therefore our care ought not to be small. If you will goe your selfe, one of my men shall goe with you, and money enough you shall haue in your purse: but to goe with your my selfe, you see my businesse will not permit me.

Husband, saie shee, I accept your gentle offer, and it may  
be

of Thomas of Reading.

he ſhal intreat my goſſip Sutton to go along with me. I ſhall be glad to ſee her husband, prepare your ſelfe when you will.

When ſhe had obtained this licence, ſhe ſent her man Weaſell to Salisbury, to know of god-wiſe Sutton if ſhe would keepe her company to London, Suttons wiſe being as willing to goe, as ſhe was to requeſt, neuer reſted till ſhe had gotten leaue of her husband; the which when ſhe had obtained, caſting in her mind their pleaſure would be ſmall, being but they twoaine: thereupon the wiſy woman ſent letters by col-lericke Cracke her man, both to Grayes wiſe, and Fitzallens wiſe, that they would meet them at Reading, who liking well of the match, conſented, and did ſo provide, that they met according to promiſe at Reading, and from thence with Coles wiſe they went altogether, with each of them a man to London, each one taking by their lodging with a ſeueral friend.

When the Merchants of London underſtood they were in towne, they muſted them euery day home to their owne houſes, where they had delicate god chere: and when they went abroad to ſee the commodities of the City, the Merchants wiues euer boze them company, being attired moſt daintily and fine: which when the Clothiers wiues did ſee, it grieved their hearts they had not the like.

Now, when they were brought into Cheap ſide, there with great wonder they beheld the ſhops of the Goldſmiths; and on the other ſide, the wealthy Mercers, whoſe ſhops ſhined with all ſorts of coloured ſilkes: in Watling ſtreet they ſaw the great number of Drapers: in Saint Martins, Shoemakers: at Saint Nicholas Church, the Beſt-Chambles: at the end of the old Change, the Fiſh-mongers: in Candleweke ſtreet, the Weavers: then came into the Jewes ſtreet, where all the Jewes dwelt: then came they to Blackewel-hall; where the Country Clothiers did uſe to meet.

Afterwards they proceeded, and came to S. Pauls Church, whoſe ſteeple was ſo high, that it ſeemed to pierce the clouds, on the top whereof, was a great and mighty Weather-cocke, of cleane ſilver, the which notwithstanding ſeemed as ſmall as a ſparrow to mens eyes, it ſtood ſo exceeding high, the which

## The pleasant History

goodly weather: sook afterwards I was stolne away, by a cunning Cripple, who found meanes one night to climb vp to the top of the steeple, and take it ho home: with the which, and a great summe of money which he had got together by begging in his life time, he builded a gate on the North side of the City, which to this day is called a cripple gate.

From thence they went to the Tower of London, which was builded by Julius Cæsar, who was Emperour of Rome. And there they beheld salt & wine, which had lye there euer since the Romans invaded this land, which was many yeeres before our Saviour Christ was borne, the wine was growne so thicke, that it might haue bene cut like a Jelly. And in that place also they saw the money that was made of leather, which in ancient time went current amongst the people.

When they had to their great contentation beheld all this, they repaire to their lodgings, having also a sumptuous supper ordained for them, with all delight that might be. And you shall vnderstand that when the Country weaners, which came vp with their dames, saw the weaners of candle wicke street, they had great desire presently to haue some conference with them; & thus one began to challenge the other say, woorkmanship: quoth Weasell, Ile wot he with any of you all for a crowne, take me if you dare: & he that makes his yard of cloth senest, shall haue it. You shall be wrought withall, said the other, and fitt were for fencrownes: but we will make this a game, that each of vs shall winde their owne quills. Content, quoth Weasell: and so to woork they went, but Weasell lost. Whereupon another of them take the matter in hand, who lost like wise: so that the London weauers triumphed against the Country, casting forth diuers trumps.

Alas poore fellows, quoth then, your hearts are good, but your hands are ill. Tush, the fault was in their legs, quoth another, pray you friend, were you not borne at home? Will y doe you aske, quoth Weasell? Wee will, sayd he, the biggest place of your leg is next to your shooe.

Crabbe hearing this, being a Cholericke of nature, chafed like a man of Law at the Bar, & he wages with them foure crownes

of Thomas of Reading.

crownes to fwaite : the others agreed, to worke they goe: but Crab conquered them all. Whereupon the London Weauers were nipt in the head like birds, and had not a word to say.

Now, saith Crab, as we haue lost nothing, so you haue wonne nothing, & because I know you cannot be right Weauers, except you be good fellows, therfore if you will goe with vs, we will bestow the Ale vpon you. That is spoken like a good fellow and like a Weauer quoth the other. So a long they went as it were to the signe of the red Crosse.

When they were set downe & had drunke well, they began merrily to prattle, and to extoll Crab to the skies. Whereupon Crab protested, that he would come and dwell among them. Nay that must not be, saith a London Weauer : the King hath giuen vs priuiledge, that none should liue among vs, but such as serue seuen yerres in London. With that Crab according to his old manner of prophetying, saith thus :

**T**He day is very neere at hand, I thinke  
When as the King of this faire Land,

Shal priuiledge you more then to :

Then Weauers shall in skarlet goe,

And to one brotherhood be brought,

The first that is in London wrought,

When other Trades-men by your fame,

Shall couet all to doe the same.

Then shall you all liue wondrous well,

But this one thing I shall you tell :

The day will come before the doome,

In Candle weeke-street shall stand no loome.

Not any Weauer dwelling there,

But men that shall more credite beare :

For Clothing shall be sore decayde,

And men vndone that vse that trade.

And yet the day some men shall see,

This trade againe shall raised be.

When.

## The pleasant Historie

When as Bayliffe of Sarum towne,  
Shall buy and purchase Bishops downe.

Where there neuer man did sow,  
Great store of goodly corne shall grow;  
And Woad, that makes all colours sound,  
Shall spring vpon that barren ground.

At that same day I tell you plaine,  
Who so aliue doth then remaine,  
A proper Maiden they shall see,  
Within the towne of Salisburie,

Offavour sweet and nature kind,  
With goodly eyes, and yet starke blind,  
This poore blind Maiden I doe say,  
In age shall goe in rich array.

And he that takes her to his wife,  
Shall lead a joyfull happy life,  
The wealthiest Clothier shall he be,  
That euer was in that Country.

But clothing kept as it hath bene,  
In London neuer shall be seene:  
For weauers then the most shall win,  
That worke for clothing next the skin.

Till pride the common-wealth doth peelee,  
And causeth huswiues to leaue their wheele.  
Then poverty vpon each side,  
Vnto those workemen shall betide.

At that time from Eagles nest,  
That proudly builded in the West,  
A sort shall come wth cunning hand,  
To bring strange weaning in this Land,  
And by their gaines that great will fall,  
They shall maintaine the Weauers Hall:  
But long they shall not flourish so,  
But folly will them overthrow.

And

of Thomas of Reading.

And men shall count it mickle shame,  
To beare that kind of Weavers name,  
And this as sure shall come to passe,  
As here is Ale within this glasse.

When the silly soules that late about him heard him speake  
in this sort, they wondred, and honoured Crabbe for the same.  
What my matters, said Weasell, doe you wonder at these  
wordes: he will tell you twenty of these tales, for which cause  
we call him our cannas prophet: he assure us his title, said  
they, and we neuer heard the like in our times: and if this should  
be true, it would be strange. Doubt not but it will be true, qu.  
Weasell, for he tell you what, he was but once for our Nicke  
kisse Nel, and presently he was out of this rime:

That kisse, O No, God give thee joy,  
Will nine months hence breed thee a boy.

And he tell you what you shall heare: we kept reckoning,  
and it fell out as late as Joane's buttocks on a close stile, for  
which cause our master durst neuer kisse a man in his sight: up-  
on this they broke company, & went euery one about his busi-  
nes, the London Weauers to their frames, and the Country  
fellows to their Dames, who after their great banquetting &  
merriment, went euery one home to their own houses, though  
with lesse money than they brought out, yet with more p'soe.  
Especially Simons wife of Southampton, who told the rest  
of her gossip, that she saw no reason, but that their husbands  
should maintaine them, as well as the merchants did their  
wives: for I tell you what, quoth she, we are as proper women  
(in my conceit) as the proudest of them all, as handsome of bo-  
dy, as faire of face, our legges as well made, and our fate as  
fine: then what reason is there (seeing our husbands are of as  
good wealth) but we should be as well maintained?

So on say true gossip, said Suttons wife: trust me, it made me  
blush, to see them braue it out so gallantly, and we to goe so  
homely: but beseege God, said the other, I will haue my hus-  
band to buy me a London gowne, or in faith he shall haue lit-  
tle quiet, so shall mine said another: and mine too, qu. the thre:  
and all of them sing the same note: so that when they came  
home,



## The pleasant History

home, their husbands had no litle to doe: & specially Simon, whose wife daily lay at him for London apparell, to whom he said, Good woman, be content, let vs goe according to our place and ability: what will the Bastilles thinke, if I should pranke thee vp like a peacocke, and thou in thy attire surpass the wealth: they would either thinke I were mad, or else that I had more money than I could well vse: consider I pray thee good wife, that such as are in their youth pasters, doe pzone in their age starke beggers.

Beside that it is enough to raise me vp in the Kings booke, for many times mens coffers are iudged by their garments: why, we are Country folks, and must keepe our selves in god compasse: gray collett, and good henn-spun cloth both best become vs; I tell thee wife, it were as vnderrent for vs to goe like Londoners as it is for Londoners to goe like courtiers,

What a coyle keepe you, quoth he, are not we Gods creatures as well as Londoners: and the Kings subjects, as well as they: then finding our wealth to be as good as theirs, why should we not goe as gay as Londoners: No, husband, no, here is the fault, wee are kept without it, onely because our husbands be not so kind as Londoners: why man, a Cobler there keepes his wife better than the best Clothier in this Countrey: nay, I will affirme it, that the London Dyestwines, and the very kitchen stutle cryers, doe exceede vs in their sundrie attire: nay, more than that, I did see the Water-bearers wife which belongs to one of our Merchants, come in with a Tankard of water on her shoulder, and put halfe a dozen gold rings on her fingers. You may then thinke, wife (quoth he) she got them not with tolenesse.

But wife, you must consider what London is, the chiefe and capitall City of all the Law, a place on the which all Strangers cast their eyes, it is (wife) the Kings Chamber and his Maiesties royall seate: to that City repaires all Nations vnder heauen. Therefore it is most meet and convenient, that the Citizens of such a City should not goe in their apparell like Peasants, but for the credit of our Countrey, weare such stately habits, as doe carry gravity and comeliness



nesse in the eyes of all beholders. Butt w<sup>h</sup> of the Country  
went so, quoth she, were it not as great credit for the L<sup>ad</sup> as  
the other? Woman, qd. her husband, it is altogether needlesse,  
and in others respects it may not be. Why then, I pray you,  
quoth she, let vs goe a well at London. A word some spoken,  
said her husband, but not so easie to be perfozmed: therefore  
wife, I pray thee hold thy prating, for thy talke is tooldish:  
yea husband, your old churlish conditions will neuer be left,  
you kepe me here like a vnder and a v<sup>o</sup>ill, and so you may  
kepe your money in your purse, you care not for your credit,  
but before I will goe so like a shepheardesse, I will first goe  
naked: I tell you plaine, I scorne it greatly, that you should  
clap a gawdewine on my back, as if I had not brought you  
two pence: before I was married, you swore I should haue  
any thing that I requested, but now all is forgotten. And  
in saying this, she went in, and some after she was so sicke that  
needs she must goe to bed: and when she was laid, she drewe  
out that night with many grievous groanes, sighing and sob-  
bing, and no rest she could take God wot. And in the morning  
when she should rise, she good soule fell doونه in a swoone,  
whiche put her maids in a great fright, who running doونه  
to their master, cryed out; Alas, alas, our Dame is dead, our  
Dame is dead. The good man hearing this ran by in all hast  
and there fell to rubbing and chaffing of her temples, sending  
for aqua vite, and saying, Ah my sweet heart, speake to me,  
good wife, alacke, alacke: call in the neighbours, you queanes,  
quoth he. With that she lift by her head, fetching a great  
groane, and presently swooned againe, and much a doe p<sup>ro</sup>is  
he had to kepe life in her: but when she was come to her selfe,  
How dost thou wife, qd. he? What wilt thou haue? for Gods  
sake tell me if thou hast a word to any thing, thou shalt haue it  
A way dissembler (qd. she) how can I beloeue thee? thou hast  
said to me as much a hundred times, and deceiued me, it is  
thy churlishnes that hath killed my heart, neuer was woman  
matcht to so vnkind a man.

Say, good wife, blame me not without cause; God know-  
eth how heartily I loue thee, I owe me no, thou dost neuer  
carry

carry my loue but on the tip of thy tongue, quoth she, I dare sweare thou desirest nothing so much as my death, and for my part I would to God thou hadst thy desire: but be content I shall not trouble thee long: and with that fetching a sigh, she swooned and gaue a great groane. The man seeing her in this case, was wondrous woe: but so soon as she had recovered her, he said, O my deare wife, if any had conceit hath ingendered this sicknesse, let me know it, or if thou knowest any thing that may procure thy health, let me vnderstand thereof and I protest thou shalt haue it, if it cost me all that euer I haue.

O husband, quoth she, how may I credit your words, when for a paltry sute of apparall you denyed me? Well, well quoth he, thou shalt haue apparrell or any thing else thou wilt request, if God send thee once health. O husband, if I may find you so kind, I shall thinke my selfe the happiest woman in the world, thy words haue greatly comforted my heart, make thinketh if I had it, I could drinke a good draught of it with wine. Well, wine was sent for: And Lord said she, that I had a peece of a chicken: I feele my stomacke desirous of some meate. Glad am I of that, said her husband, and so the woman with in a few dayes after was very well.

But you shall vnderstand, that her husband was faine to buye her London like, ere he could get her quiet, neither would it please her except the stiffe was bought in Cheapside: for out of Cheapside nothing would content her, were it neuer so good: insomuch, that if she thought a Taylor of Cheapside made not her gowne, she would sweare it were quite spoiled.

And hauing thus wonne her husband to her will, when the rest of the Clothiers wines heard hereof, they would be faine in the like sort too: so that euer since, the wines of South-hampton, Salisbury, of Gloucester, Worcester, and Reading, went all as gallant and as hye as any Londoners wines,

How the Clothiers sent the King aide into France, and how he overcame his brother Robert, and brought him into England, and how the Clothiers feasted his Majesty and his sonne at Reading. Chap. 7.

The

**T**he King continually being at the wars in France, against Lewis the French King, and Duke Robert of Normandy, sending for divers supplies of souldiers out of England, the Clothiers at their owne proper charge sent out a great number, and sent them over to the King.

Which Roger Bishop of Salisbury, who gouerned the Realme in the Kings absence, did certifie the King of, with his letters written in their commendations.

And after ward it came to passe, that God sent his Highnes victorie over his enemies, and hauing taken his brother prisoner, brought him most ioyfully with him into England, and appointed him to be kept in Carbiske Castle prisoner, yet with this fauour, that he might hunt and haue where he would, by and aboute the Country, and in this sort hee liued a good while, of whom we will speake moze at large hereafter.

The King being thus come home, after his winters rest, he made his Summers progresse into the west countrey, to take a view of all the chiefe Townes: wherof the Clothiers being advertised, they made great preparation against his coming, because he had promised to visit them all.

And when his Grace came to Reading, he was entertained and receiued with great ioy and triumph: Thomas Cole being the chiefe man of regard in all the Towne, the King honozed his house with his princely presence, where during the Kings abode, he, and his Son, and Nobles were highly feasted.

Where the King beheld the great number of people, that was by that one man maintained in worke, whose hearty affection and loue toward his Majesty did well appeare, as well by their outward countenances, as their gifts presented vnto him: But of Cole himselfe the King was so well perswaded, that he committed much trust in him, & put him in great authority in the Towne. Further moze the King said, What for the loue which those people bore him liuing, that hee would lay his bones among them when he was dead. For I know not, said he, where they may be better bestowed, till the blessed day of resurrection, then among these my friends which are like to be happy partakers of the same.

## The pleasant History

whereupon his grace caused there to be builded a most goodly & famous Abbey: in which he might be to his deuotion to God, by increasing his seruice, and leave example to others his successors to doe the like. Like wille within the towne he after builded a faire & goodly Castle, in the which he often kept his Court, which was a place of his choise residence during his life, saying to the Clothiers that seeing he found them such faithfull subjects, he would be their neighbour, and dwell among them.

After his graces royal feasting at Reading, he proceeded in progresse, till he had visited the whole West-countrie, being wondrously delighted to see those people so diligent to apply their businesse: & comming to Salisbury, the Bishop received his graces with great ioy, and with triumph attended on his Grace to his Palace, where his Highnes lodged.

There Sutton the Clothier presented his Highnesse with a broad cloth, of so fine a threed, and exceeding good workmanship, & there withall of so faire a colour, as his Grace gave commendation thereof, and as it is said, he held it in such high estimation that thereof he made his Parliament robe, & the first Parliament that was euer in England, was graced with the Kings person in these robes, in requestall whereof his Highnes after ward yielded Sutton many princely fauours.

And it is to be remembred, that Simon of South-hampton (seeing the King had overpast the place where he dwelt) came with his wife and seruants to Salisbury, and against the Kings going forth of that Citie, hee caused a most pleasant arbour to be made vpon the toppe of the hill leading to Salisbury, beset all with red and white Roses, in such sort, that not any part of the timber could be seene, within the which sat a maiden attired like a Queen, attended on by a faire traine of maidens, who at the Kings approach presented him with a Garland of sweet flowres, yielding him such honour as the Ladies of Rome were wont to doe to their Princes after their victories: which the King took in gracious part, and for his farewell from that Country, they boze him company ouer part of the plaine, with the sound of diuers sweet instrumentall musicke.

## of Thomas of Reading.

Atk. All which taken his Grace understood was done at y<sup>e</sup> cost of a Clothier, he said he was the most honoured by those men, above all the mean table as in his Land: & to his Highnes possion to Exceter, having given great rewards to these maidens.

Thomas Dore and the restone of the Clothiers, against his Graces, committing thither, had obtained vincts sumptuous shewes; first, there was one that presented the person of Augustus Caesar the Emperour, who commanded after the Romanne invasion, that their City should be called Augusta, after his owne name, which before time was called Isea, and of later years, Exceter.

There his Majesty was royally feasted seven dayes together, at the onely cost of Clothiers, but the viuers delights and Sunday pastimes which they made there before the King, and his Nobles, is too long here to be rehearsed, and therefore I will overpass them to another sectionnesse.

His grace then coming along the Country, at last came to Gloucester, an ancient City, which was builded by Glouc, a British King, who named it after his owne name, Gloucester. Here was his Majesty entertained by Gray the Clothier, who profess him selfe to be of that ancient family of Graces, whose first originall issued out of that ancient & Honourable Castle and Towne of Wiltyn.

Here was the King most bountifullly feasted, having in his company his brother Robert (although his prisoner the same time.) And his Grace being desirous to see the maidens card and spaine, they were a purpose set to their worke: among whom was faire Margaret with her white hand, whose excellent beauty having pierc't the eyes of the amorous Duke, it made such an impression in his heart, that after ward he could neuer forget her: and so vehemently was his affection kindled, that he could take no rest, till by writing he had bewrayed his mind: but at this we will speake more in another place: and the King at his departure said, that to gratifie them, he would make his sonnes Robert their Carle, who was the first Carle that ever was in Gloucester.

Now when his Grace was come from thence, he went to Gloucester,

## The pleasant Historie

Before, where William Fitz-allen made preparation for all honourable sports to receive him, which was being boorne of great parentage, was not to learn how to entertaine his Spales being descended of that famous Family, whose patrimony lay about the Colne of Oxfordshire, which Colne his predecessors had inclosed with stately walls of Stone.

Although severall times had he seriously froned on some of them that their children were faine to become tradesmen, whose burthens were to them in stead of lands, notwithstanding having contrived against the same of this man, both by his great wealth, and also in his posterity, whose eldest son Henry, the Kings Cousin, became afterwards the Mayor of London, who was the first Spales that ever was in that City, who governed the same 13. years: and then his son Roger Fitz-allen was the second Mayor.

The princely pleasures that in Wiltshire were shewn the King, were many & marvellous, and in no place has his Majesty received more delight then here: for the which at his departure he did owe to himselfe very thankfull. So when his Grace had thus taken view of all his good townes last town, and in that progresse had visited these Clothiers, he returned to London, with great joy of his Commons.

How *Hodgekins* of *Hallifax* came to the Court, and complained to the King, that his priviledge was nothing worth, because when they found any offender, they could not get a hang-man to execute him: and how by a Fryer a gin was devised to chop off mens heads off it selfe. Chap. 8.

After that *Hodgekins* had got the priviledge for the townes of *Hallifax*, to hang by such themes as stole their cloth in the night, presently without any further judgement, all the Clothiers of the town were bycading glad, and perturbed themselves, that now their goods would be safe all night, without watching them at all, so that whereas before the town maintained certaine watchmen to keepe their cloth by night, they were hereupon dismissed as a thing unnecessarie to be done, supposing



of Thomas of Reading.

supposing with themselves, that seeing they should be straight hanged that were found faulty in this point, that no man would be so desperate to enterpryse any such act. And indeed the matter being noysed through the whole Country, that they were straight to be hanged that use such theuery, it made many lewd liuers to refraine such theuery.

Nevertheless, there was at the same time liuing, a notable Thiefe named Wallis, whom in the North they called Mighty Wallis, in regard of his valour and manhood: This man being most subtil in such a kind of kniuery, hauing heard of this late p[er]tussledge, and there w[it]hall of the Colonies security, said that once he would venture his necke for a packe of Northerne cloth: and therefore comming to one or two of his companions he asked if they would be partners in his adventure, & if (quoth he) you will herein hazard your bodie, you shall be sharers in all our botties.

At length by many perswasions the men consented: whereupon late in the night, they got them all to a Farriours shop and called by the folks of the house. What the foule st wald you haue (quoth they) at this time of the night? Wallis answered, saying, Good-fellowes, we would haue you to remouie the shooes of our horses fete, and set them on againe, and for your paynes you shall be well pleased. The Smith at length was perswaded, and when he had pluckt off all the shooes from their horses fete, they would needs haue them all set on againe quite contrary, with the cakins for ward, that should stand back ward, he say, say man, qd. the Smith, are you like fules what the deile doe you meane to b[re]ake your crags: good faith I tro the men be woad. Not so, Smith, qd. they, doe thou as we bid thee, & thou shalt haue thy mony: for it is an old p[ro]uerbe, Be it better, or be it worse,

Please you the man that beares the purse.

Good faith and so I fall, qd. the Smith, and so did as he was wisshed. When Wallis had thus caused their horses to be shod, to Wallis they went, where they without any let, laded their horses with cloth, and departed a contrary way.

In the morning, so sone as the Clothiers came to the field, they



## The pleasant History

they found that they were rob'd, whereupon one came to another to tell these things. Now when Hodgekins heard thereof, rising up in haste, he willed his neighbours to marke and see, if they could not descry either the foot-stepes of men or horses, which being done, they perceived that horses had ben there, and seeking to pursue them by their foot-steps, they went a cleane contrary way, by reason that the horses were shodde backward: & when in vaine they had long pursued them, they returned, being neerer the neere. Now Wallis vnder this feate so long, that at length he was taken, and two more with him: whereupon according to the privilege of the Towne, they put halsters about the thaires necks presently to hang them vp.

When they were come to the place appointed, Wallis and the rest being out of hope to escape death, prepared themselves patiently to suffer the rigor of the Law. And therewith the rest laying open the lewdnesse of their life, grievously lamenting for his sinnes: at length commending their soules to God, they yielded their bodies to the grane, at which sight the people were greatly moued with pittie, because they had neuer sene men to hanging before: but when they should haue ben tyen vp, Hodgekins willed one of his neighbours to play the Hang-mans part, who would not by any meanes doe it, although he was a very poore man, who for his paines should haue ben possessor of all their apparell. When he would not yield to the office, one of them which had his cloth stolne, was commanded to doe the deed; but he in like manner would not, saying: When I haue the skill to make a man, I will hang a man, ift chance my workmanship doe not like me.

And thus from one to another, the office of the Hang-man was possted off. At last a Kogge came by, whom they would haue compelled to haue done that deed. Nay, my masters, quoth he, not so: but as you haue got a privilege for the towne, so you were best to procure a commission to make a hang-man, or else you are like to be without for me. Now when Hodgekins quoth one, I pray you doe this office your selfe, you haue had most losse, and therefore you should be the most ready to hang them your selfe. No, not I (quoth Hodgekins) though my losse were

of Thomas of Reading.

were ten times greater then it is, not withstanding loke which of these Thebes will take upon him to hang the other, shall haue his life saued, other wise they shall all be pison till I can prouide a hangman.

When Wallis saw the matter brought to this passe, he began stoutly to reply, saying, my matters of the Towne of Wallis, though your priuilege stretch to hang men by presently that are found stealing of your goods, yet it giues you no warrant to imprison them till you prouide them a hangman: my selfe, with these my fellowes, haue here yelded our selues to satisfie the Law, and if it be not performed, the fault is yours, and not ours, and therefore we humbly take our leaue: from the gallows the xviij. of August. And with that he leapt from the ladder, and hurld the halter at Hodgekins face.

When the Clothiers saw this, they knew not what to say, but taking them by the sleeves, entreated to haue their owne againe. Not so, qu. Wallis, you get not the value of a packe or a bauby: we haue stolne your cloth, then why doe you not hang vs here we haue made our selues ready, and if you will not hang vs, chuse. A plague vpon you, qu. he, you haue hindered me God knowes what; I made account to dine this day in heauen, and you keepe me here on earth where there is not a quarter of that good cheare. The foule euill take you all. I was fully prouided to giue the gallowses a boy on the eare, and now God knowes when I shall be in so good a mine againe: and so he with the rest of his companions departed.

When Hodgekins saw, that notwithstanding their Thebery, how they flouted at their lenity, hee was much moued in minde: and as he stood in his dumps chelwing his cud, making his dinner with a dish of melancholy, a gray Fryer reuerently saluted him in this sort: All haile, good-man Hodgekins, happinesse and health be euer with you, and to all successors of lewd liuers, God send everlasting toyes.

I am soyy good-man Hodgekins, that the great priuledge which our King gaue to this towne, comes to no greater purpose: better farre had it beene that it had neuer beene granted then so lightly regarded: the towne hath suffered throught the

## The pleasant History

stone penitence, an everlasting reproof this day, onely because wilful pittie hath blinded iustice.

Consider, that compassion is not to be had vpon theenes and robbers: pittie onely appertaineth to the vertuous sort, who are ouerwhelmed with the waues of misery & mischance, what great cause of boldnesse haue you giuen to bad liuers, by letting these fellows thus to escape, & how shall you now keepe your goods in safety, seeing you fullfill not the law which should be your defence: neuer thinke that thauies will make any conscience to carry away your goods, whi they find them selues in no danger of death, who haue more cause to prasse your pittie, then commend your wisdom: wherefore in time seeke to preuent the ensuing euill.

For my owne part, I haue that care of your good, that I would worke all good meanes for your benefit, and yet not so much in respect of your profit, as for the desire I haue to vphold iustice, and seeing I find you and the rest so womanish, that you could not find in your hearts to hang a thiefe, I haue deuised how to make a gin, that shall cut off their heads without mans helpe, and if the King will allow thereof.

When Hodgekins heard this, he was some what comforted in minde, and said to the Fryer, that if by his cunning he could performe it, he would once againe make suite to the King to haue his grant for the same. The Fryer tolled him to haue no doubt in him: and so when he had deuised it, he got a Carpenter to frame it out of hand.

Hodgekins in the meane tyme passed by to the Court, and told his Maestie that the priuiledge of Wallislar was not worth a pudding. And by so, said the King: Because, quoth Hodgekins, we can get neuer a hangman to trust our thieues: but first shall like your good Grace, (quoth he) there is a gentle Fryer, that will make vs a deuice, which shall without the hand of man cut off the craggies of all such carles, if your Maestie will please to allow thereof.

The King vnderstod the full effect of the matter, at length granted his petition: where vpon till this day, it is obserued in Wallislar, that such as are taken stealing of their cloth, haue their heads thopt off with the same gin.

How

of Thomas of Reading.

How the Bailiffes of London could get no man to bee a Catchpole, and how certaine Flemings tooke that office upon them, whereof many of them were fled into this Realme, by reason of certaine waters that had drowned a great part of their Country. Chap. 9.

**T**he City of London being at that time gouerned by Bailiffes, it came to passe, that in a certaine tray two of their Catch-poles were killed, for at that time they had not the name of Sergeants: and you shall vnderstand, that their office was then so much hated and detested of Englishmen, that none of them would take it vpon them: so that the Bailiffes were glad to get any man whatsoever, and to giue him certaine wages to perforce that office.

It came to passe, as I said before, that two of their Officers by arresting of a man, were at one instant slaine, by meanes whereof the Bailiffes were enforced to seeke others to put in their romes, but by no meanes they could get any, wherefore according to their wonted manner, they made proclamation, that if there were any man y<sup>e</sup> would present himselfe before them, they should not onely be settled in that office during their liues, but also should haue such maintenance and allowance, as for such men was by the City provided: & notwithstanding that it was an office most necessary in the Commonwealth, yet did the poore wretch despise it, that liued in any estimation among his neighbours.

At last, a couple of Flemings, which were fled into this land, by reason that their Country was drowned with the sea, hearing the proclamation, offered themselves vnto the Bailiffes, to serue in this place, who were presently receiued and accepted, & according to order had garments giuen them which were of scarlet, blue & red, their coates, breeches, & stockings, whereby they were knowne and discerned from other men.

Within halfe a yeere after, it came to passe, that Thomas Dove of Creter came vp to London, who hauing by his fellowship and good fellowship, brought himselfe greatly behind hand,

## The pleasant History

was in danger to diuers men of the City, among the rest, one of his Creditors, sent an officer to arrest him. The Dutchman that had not bene long experienced in such matters, and hearing how many of his fellows had bin killed for attempting to arrest men, stood quivering and quaking in a corner of the street to watch for Thomas Doue, and hauing long waited, at length he espied him: whereupon he prepared his mace ready, and with a pale countenance proceeded to his office; at what time comming behind the man, suddenly with his mace he knockt him on the pate, saying, I arrest you, giuing him such a blow, that he fel'd him to the ground.

The Catchpole thinking he had killed the man, left his mace behind him and ranne away: the Creditor he ran after him, calling and crying that he should turne againe: But the Fleming would not by any meanes turne backe, but got him quite out of the City, & toke Sanctuary at Westminster.

Doue being come to himselfe, arose and went to his Inn: no man hindring his passage, being not a little glad he so escaped the danger, yet neuerthelesse, at his next comming to London, another Catchpole met with him, and arrests him in the Kings name.

Doue being dismayed at this mischleuous mischance, knew not what to doe: at last hee requested the Catchpole that hee would not violently cast him in prison, but stay till such time as he could send for a freind to be his surety; and although kindnesse in a Catchpole be rare, yet was he won with faire words to doe him this fauour: whereupon Doue desired one to goe to his Dast Iarrat, who immediately came with him & offered himselfe to be Doves surety.

The Officer, who neuer saw this man before, was much amazed at his sight: for Iarrat was a great and mighty man of body, of countenance grim, and exceeding big of stature, so that the Catchpole was wonderfully afraid, asking if he could find neuer a surety, but the diuell, most fearfully intreating him to conuise him away, and he would doe Doue any fauour. What, wilt thou not take my word, qu. Iarrat saith, qu. the Catchpole, if it were for any matter in hel, I would take your word

of Thomas of Reading.

as soone as any diuells in that place, but saying it is for a matter on earth, I would gladly haue a surety.

¶ Whby, thou whozson cricker, (quoth Jarrat) thou maggat, apie, thou spittner, thou paulltry spider, dost thou take me for a diuell? Sirrah, take my word, I charge thee, for this man, or else godman butter fly, Ile make thee repent it. The Officer, while he was in the house, said, he was content, but as soone as he came into the street, he cryed, saying: Helpe, helpe, god neighbours, or else the diuell will carry away my prisoner: notwithstanding, there was not one man would stir to be the Catchpoles aide. Which when he saw, he took fast hold on Thomas Dove, and would not by any meanes let him goe.

Jarrat seeing this, made no more adoe, but coming to the Officer, gaue him such a fillip on the sozehead with his finger, that he fell'd the poze Fleming to the ground: and while he lay in the street stretching his heeles, Jarrat took Dove vnder his arme and carried him home, where he thought himselfe as safe, as King Charlemaine in Mount-alban.

The next morning Jarrat conveyed Dove out of Towne, who afterward kept him in the Countrey, and came no more in the Catchpoles clawes.

How Duke Robert came a wooing to Margaret with the white hand, and how he appointed to come and steale her away from her Masters. Chap. 10.

**T**he beautifull Margaret, who had now dwelt with her Dame the space of foure yeres, was highly regarded and secretly beloued of many gallant & worthy Gentlemen of the Country, but of two most especially, Duke Robert, and Sir William Ferris. It chanced on a time, that faire Margaret with many other of her spasters folkes, went a hay-making attired in a red Hammell petticoate, and a broad straw hat vpon her head, she had also a hay-forks, and in her lappe she did carry her breake-fast. As she went along, Duke Robert, with one or two of his hiepers, met with her, whose amiable sight as now anew re-mindde & secret fire of loue, which



## The pleasant Historie

which long lay smothering in his heart. Wherefoze meeting her so happily, he saluted her thus friendly.

Faire Maide, good morrow, are you walking so diligently to your labour? It is must the weather be faire, when the Sun shines so cleare, and the day whole some that is dyed with such spientient rayes. Renowned and most noble Duke (so the) poore haruest folkes pray for faire weather, and it is the laborers comfort to see his worke prosper, and the more happy may we count the day, that is blessed with your princely presence: but more happy, said the Duke, are they which are conuersant in thy company. But let me intreat thee to turne backe to thy masters with me, and commit thy worke to some that are fitter for such toyle: trust me, me thinks thy Dame is too much ill advised, in setting thee to such homely busines. I wille thou canst endure this vyle besetmng seruitude, whose delicate limbs were neuer framed to p[ro]oue such painfull experiments.

Albeit, quoth she, it becommeth not me to controule your iudiciall thoughts, yet, were you not the Duke, I would say, your opinion deceiued you: though your faire eyes seemed cleare, yet I see the imperfection, if they cast befoze your mind any shadow or sparke of beaussy in me: But I rather thinke, because it hath been an old saying, that women are proud to heare themselves praised, that you either speake this to d[is]turb away the time, or to winne from me my too apparant imperfections. But I humbly intreate pardon, too long haue I soze slowd my businesse, and the while my selfe ouer-bold in your presence; and therewith, with a courtly grace, beuding her knees to the courteous Duke, she went for ward to the field, and the Duke to the Towne of Glocester.

When he came thither, he made his hearers great cheare, intreating them they would giue him respite to be a while with old Gray: for we twaine must haue a game or two, quoth he: and for my safe returne, I gage to you my princely word, that as I am a true Knight and a Gentleman, I will returne safe to your charge againe.

The hearers being content, the Duke departed, and with old Gray goes to the field, to peruse the Wiltshire folkes, where while



while Gray found himself baste in many matters, he took opportunity to talke with Margaret; the who by his letters before was pylate to his purpose; queth beforeward the cause of his continuing to whom he spake to this effect:

Faire spake, I doo long since manifest my loue to the by my letter, tell me therfore, were it not better to be a Dutches then a Dudge: a Lady of high reputation, then a seruant of simple degree: with me thou mightest liue in pleasure, where here thou dost thy dayes forth in paine; by my loue thou shouldst be made a Lady of great treasure: where now thou art poore and beggerly; all manner of delights should then attend on the, and whatsoener thy heart desireth, thou shouldst haue: wherefore seeing it lies in thy owne choice, make thy selfe happy, by consenting to my suite.

He, (quoth she) I confesse your loue deserues a noble honour, your affection a faithful friend, such a one as could misse but one heart and minde of two hearts & bodies; but surely bitt it is that the Turtle should match with the Eagle, though her lye be neuer so pure, her wings are built to mount so high. While Thales gazed on the starres, he stumbled in a pit. And they that chine brauely, catch a fall suddenly: what availeth high dignitie in time of aduersity: it neither helpeth the sorrows of the heart, nor remoues the bodiles misery: as for wealth & treasure, what are they, but fortunes baits to bying men in danger: good for nothing but to make people forget themselves: and whereas you alledge pouerty to be a hinderer of the hearts comfort, I find it my selfe contrary, knowing more surety to rest vnder a simple habit, then a royall robe: and verily there is none in the world poore, but they that think themselves poore: for such as are endued with content, are rich hauing nothing els, but he that is possessed with riches, without content, is most wretched and miserable. Wherefore most noble Duke, albeit I account my selfe vntowarty of your least fauor, yet I would desire you to match your loue to your like, and let me rest to my rate, and vse my forke for my living.

Consider faire Margaret, (quoth he) that it lies not in mans power to place his loue where he list, being the worke of an

## The pleasant History

W<sup>h</sup>ch belty. A bird was neuer seene in Pontus, no true lone in  
A flitting mind: neuer shall remoue the affection of my heart  
which in nature resembleth the stone A biston, whose fire can  
neuer be coled: wherefore stout Spalden giue not obstinate  
deniall, where gentle acceptance ought to be receiued.

Faire sir (quoth she) consider what high displeasure may rise  
by a rash match, what danger a Kings courtes may breed, my  
worthles matching with your Royalty, may perhaps regaine  
your liberty, & hazard my life: then call to mind how little  
you should enioy your loue, or I my wedded A oyd.

The Duke of these words made this reply, that if she consented  
she should not breed any danger. The thunder (quoth he)  
is diu<sup>n</sup> away by ringing of belles, the A lions wrath quashed  
by a yielding body: how much more a Brothers anger  
with a Brothers entreaty. By me he hath receiued many sa-  
uours, and neuer yet did he requite any one of them: and who  
is ignorant that the princely Crowne which adorneth his head  
is my right: all which I am content he shall still enioy, so he  
requite my kinnesse. But if he should not, then would I be  
like those men (that eating of the tree of life) forget the Com-  
pany where they were borne, and neuer more should this climate  
couer my head, but with thee would I liue in a strange land,  
being better content with an egge in thy company, then with  
all the delicacies in England.

The Spalden hearing this, who with many other words  
was long wooed, at last consented, where y<sup>e</sup>lving to him her  
heart with her hand, he departed: appointing to certifie her  
from Cardiffe Castle, what determination he would follow:  
so taking his leaue of Gray, he went to his brothers, and with  
them yoked to Cardiffe.

As to it is to be remembred, that sir William Ferrers with-  
in a day or two after came vnto Grayes house, as it was his  
ordinary custom, but not so much y<sup>e</sup>lvis for Grayes company  
as for the mind he had to Margarer his A aide, who although  
he were a married man, and had a faire Lady to his wife, yet  
he laid bare siege to the fort of his Spaldens chastity, hauing  
with many faire words sought to allure her, & by the offer of  
sundry rich gifts to tempt her: but when she saw, that by a turn  
died

of Thomas of Reading.

vied denials she could not be rid of him, she now chanced on a sudden to give him such an answer, as drove him from a conceit into such a conceit, as neuer after that time he troubled her.

Sir William Ferrers being very importunate to haue her grant his desire, and when after sundry assaults she gaue him still the repulse, hee would needs know the reason why she would not loue him: quoth he, If thou dost but consider who he is that seeketh thy fauour, what pleasure he may doe thee by his purse, and what credit by his countenance, thou wouldest neuer stand on such nice points. If I be thy friend, who care be thy foe? and what is he that will once call thy name in question for any thing: therefore sweet girl, be better satisfied, and refuse not my offer being so large.

Truly sir William (quoth she) though there be many reasons to make me deny your suite, yet is there one aboue the rest that causes me I cannot loue you. Now I pray thee, my wench let me know that o'oth he, and I will amend it what-soeuer it be. Pardon me sir, said Margaret, if I should speake my mind, it would possibly offend you, & doe me no pleasure because it is a defect in nature, which no physicke can cure. Sir William hearing her say so, being abashed at her speech, said, Faire Margaret, let me (if I may obtaine no more at thy hands) yet intreat thee to know what this defect should be, I am not wry-neckt, crook-legd, stubb-tated, lame-handed, nor blare-eyed: what can make this dislike? I neuer knew any body that took exception at my person before.

And the more so'ry am I, quoth she, that I was so malicious to speak it, but pardon me my presumption, good sir William, I would I had borne like the Sforke tonguelesse, then should I neuer haue caused your disquiet. Nay sweet Margaret, quoth he, tell me deare loue, I commend thy singlenesse of heart, good Margaret speake. Good sir William let it rest, quoth she, I know you will not helene it when I haue reuealed it, neither is it a thing that you can helpe: and yet such is my foolishnesse, had it not bene so; that, I thinke verily I had granted your suite ere now: But seeing you vexe me so

## The pleasant Historie

much to know what it is, I will tell you: It is fir, your ill-favoured great nose, that hangs sagging so lothsomely to your lips, that I cannot finde in my heart so much as to kisse you.

Albat, my nose, quoth he: is my nose so great and I neuer know it? certainly I thought my nose to be as comely as any mans: but this it is, we are all apt to think well of our selves, and a great while better than we ought: but let me see; my nose! by the masse 'tis true, I doe now see it my selfe: God know, how long I blinded before? Hereupon it is certaine, that the knight was gyven into such a conceit, as none could perswade him but his nose was so great and big, his Lady, or any other that spake to the contrary, he would say they were flatterers, and that they lied, inso much that he would be ready to strike some of them that commended and spake well of his nose. If they were men of worship, or any other that comforted him in his opinion, he would sweare they flouted him, and be ready to challenge them the field. He became so ashamed of himselfe, that after that day hee would neuer goe abroad, whereby Margaret was well rid of his company.

On a time, a wise and grave Gentleman seeing him grounded in his conceit so strongly, gave his Lady counsell, not to contrary him therein, but rather say that she would seeke out some cunning Physitian to cure him: so, said he, as sir William hath taken this conceit of himselfe, so is he likely neuer to change other opinion, till his owne conceit both remove it, the which must be wisely wrought to bying it to passe.

Altherupon the Lady hauing conferred with a Physitian that bare a great name in the countrey, hee undertooke to remove this sons conceit by his skill. The day being appointed when the Physitian should come, and the knight being told thereof, for very loy he would goe sooth to meete him: when a woman of the towne saw the knight having heard what rumour went because of his nose, she looked very steadfastly vpon him: the knight, casting his eye vpon her, seeing her to gaze so wisely in his face, with an angry countenance sayd thus to her. Why, how now good huswife, cannot you get you about your business? The woman being a thye with quaine, answered

of Thomas of Reading.

red him cuttedly, *How may I not, qd. he. How, you sayd,*  
*What is the cause, said the knight? Because, quoth he, your*  
*nose stands in my way: wherewith the knight being very*  
*angry, and abashed, went backe againe to his house.*

The physician being come, he had filled a certaine bladder with shepes blood, and conveyed it into his sterne, where at the issue of the bladder he had put in a piece of a swans quill through the which the blood should runne out of the bladder so close by his hand, that he holding the knight by the nose, it might not be perceived, but that it issued thence. All things being prepared, hee told the knight, that by a soule corrupt blood wherewith the veins of his nose were over-charged, this impediment did grow, therefore, quoth he, to haue redress for this disease, you must haue a vein opened in your nose, whence this soule corruption must be taken: whereupon it will follow, that your nose will fall againe to his naturall proportion, and neuer shall you bee troubled with this griefe any more, and thereupon will I gage my life.

I pray you master Doctor, said the knight, is my nose so big as you make it? With reuerence I may speake it, said the physician, to tell the truth, and answere flattery, I neuer saw a more mishapen nose so soule to sight. Lo you now againe, quoth the knight, this is you that said my nose was as well, as handsome, and as comely a nose as any mans.

Alas sir, qd. hee, I spake it (God wot) because you should not grieve at it, nor take my words in ill part, neither did it indeed become me to mislike of your nose.

All this we will quickly remedy, said the physician, haue no doubt: and with that, he very orderly prickt him in the nose, but not in a veine whereby he might bleed: and presently having a trickie finely to stoppe the quill, the blood ranne into a basin in great abundance; and when the bladder was empty, and the basin almost full, the physician seemed to close the veine, and asked how hee felt his nose, shewing the great quantity of filthy blood which from thence he had taken.

The knight beholding it with great wonder, said, he thought that no man in the world had bene troubled with such abun-

## The pleasant History

dances of corrupt blood in his whole body, as lay in his mist shapen nose, and there withall he began to touch and handle his nose, saying, that he felt it mightily assuaged. Immediately a glasse was brought wherein he might behold himselfe: so enmarryed, he now I praise God, I see my nose is come into some reasonable proportion, and I feele my selfe very well eased of the burthen thereof, but if it continue thus, that's all. I will warrant your worship, said the physician, for ever being troubled with the like againe. Whereupon the knight received great joy, and the Doctor a high reward.

How *Thomas* of Reading was murdered at his Oasts house of Colebrooke, who also had murdered many before him, and how their wickednesse was at length reucaled. Chap. 11.

**T**HOMAS of Reading hauing many occasions to come to London as well about his owne affaires, as also the Buggs businesse, being in a great office vnder his Maestie, it chanced on a time, that his host and his hostesse of Colbrooke, who though constancie had murdered many of the guests, and hauing euery time he came thither great store of his money to lay by, appointed him to be the next fat pig that should be killed: for it is to be vnderstand, that when they plotted the murder of any man, this was alwaies their terme, the man to his wife, and the woman to her husband: wife, there is now a fat pig to be had if you want one. Whereupon she would answer thus, I pray you put him in the hogstie till to morrow. At his was, when any came thither alone without others in his company, and they saw he had great store of money.

At his man should be then laid in the chamber right ouer the kitchen, which was a faire chamber, a better set out then any other in the house: the bedstead therein, though it were little and low, yet was it most cunningly carued, and faire to the eye, the feet thereof were fast nailed to the chamber Raze, in such sort, that it could not in any wise fall, the bed that lay therein was fast sowed to the sides of the bedstead: so ordered, that part of the chamber whereupon this bed and bedstead



of Thomas of Reading.

stead stood, was made in such sort, that by the pulling out of two yron pynes below in the kitchin, it was to be let downe and taken up by a draw-bylde, or in manner of a trap-dore: moreover in the kitchin, directly under the place where this should fall, was a mighty great caldron, where in they used to seeth the liquor when they went to brywing. Now, the men appointed for slaughter, were laid into this bed, and in the dead tyme of the night when they were found a slepe, by plucking out the foresaid yron pynes, downe fell the man fall out of his bed into the boyling caldron, and all the cloths that were upon him: where being suddenly scalded and brywned, he was neuer able to cry or speake one word.

Then had they a little ladder euer standing ready in the kitchin, by the which they presently mounted into the said chamber, and there closely take away the mans apparell, as also his money, in his malle or cap: and then liffing vp the said falling dore which hung by hinges, they made it fast as befoze.

The dead body would they take presently out of the caldron: & throw it downe the slaer, which ran nere vnto their house, whereby they escaped all danger.

Now if in the morning any of the rest of the guests that had talkt with the murdered man dze eue, chaunst to aske for him, as hauing occasion to ride the same way that he should haue done, the good-man would answer, that he take horse a good while befoze day, and that he himselfe did set him forward: the horse the good-man would also take out of the stable, & conuay him by a hay-barne of his, that stood from his house a mile or two, wherof himselfe did alwayes keepe the keyes full charity, and when any hay was to be brought from thence, with his owne hands he would vsuer it: then befoze the horse should goe from thence, he would dismarke him: as if he were a long talle, he would make him curfall: or else crop his eares or cut his mane; or put out one of his eyes; and by this meanes hee kept himselfe unknowne.

Now, Thomas of Reading, as I said befoze, being markt, & kept for a fat pig, he was laid in the same chamber of death, but by reason Gray of Gloucester chaunced also to come that night, he escaped scalding,

The



## The pleasant History

The next time he came he was late there againe, but because he fell asleep, was warme in his bed, one came riding through the Towne and cryed pittously, that London was all on a fire, and that it had burned downe Thomas Becketts house in West-cheape, and a great number more in the same street and yet (quoth he) the fire is not quencht.

Which things when Thomas of Reading heard, he was very sorrowfull, for of the same Becket that day he had receiued a great peece of money, and had left in his house many of his wylthings, and some that appertained to the King also: therefore there was no way but he would ride back againe to London presently, to see how the matter stood, thereupon making himselfe ready, departed. His croffe fortune caused his Daff to frowne, nevertheless the next time (quoth he) will pay for all notwithstanding God so wrought, that they were preuented then like wise, by reason of a great fray that hapned in the house betwixt a couple that fell out at dice, in so much as the murderers themselves were enforced to call him by being a man in great authoritie, that he might set the house in quietnesse, out of which by meanes of this quarrell, they doubted to lose many things.

Another time when he should haue bene laid in the same place, he fell so sicke, that he requested to haue some body to watch with him, whereby also they could not bying their vile purpose to passe. But hard it is to escape the ill fortunes wherunto a man is allotted: for albeit that the next time that he came to London, his horse stumbled & broke one of his legs, as he should ride homeward, yet hired he another to hasten his owne death, for there is no remedy but he would goe to Colebroke that night: but by the way he was heauy asleep, that he could scant keepe himselfe in the saddle; and when he came nere to the Towne, his nose burst out suddenly a bleeding.

Well, so his Inn he came, and so heauy was his heart that he could eate no meat: his Daff & Daffesse hearing he was so melancholy, came vp to cheare him, saying, Iesus quaffer Cole, what ailes you to night: neuer did we see you thus sad before: will it please you to haue a quart of burnt sacke. With  
a good

of Thomas of Reading.

a god will (quoth he) now would to God Tom Dowe were here, he would surely make me merry, & we should lacke no mirth: but I am sorry for the man with all my heart that he is come so farre behind hand: but alas, so much can euery man say, but what god doth to him: so, no, it is not words can helpe a man in this case, the man hath need of other releeffe then so. Let me see: I haue but one child in the world, and that is my daughter, and halfe that I haue is hers, the other halfe my wifes. Well, yet then: shall I be good to no body but them? In conscience, my wealth is too much for a couple to possesse, and what is our religion without charity? And to whom is charity moze to be the while, than to decayed house holders.

God my Duff lend me a pen and inke, and some paper, so I will write a letter vnto the poore man straight: & something I will giue him: That almes which a man bestowes with his owne hands, he shall be sure to haue deliuered, and God knowes how long I shall liue.

With that, his Duffesse dissemblingly answered, saying, Doubt not, Maister Cole, you are like enough by the course of nature to liue many yeeres: God knowes (quoth he) I neuer found my heart so heauy before. By this time pen, inke, & paper were brought, setting himselfe to writing as followeth.

**I**N the name of God, Amen. I bequeath my soule to God & my body to the ground, my goods equally between my wife *Eleanor* and *Isabel* my daughter. Item I giue too *Thomas Dowe* of Excester one hundred pounds, nay that is to little, I giue to *Thomas Dowe* two hundred pounds in money, to be paid vnto him presently vpon his demand thereof by my said wife and daughter.

He, how say you Duff (qu. he) is not this well? I pray you read it. His Duffe looking thereon, said, why Maister Cole, what haue you written here: you said you would write a letter, but methinks you haue made a will. What need haue you to doe thus? thanks be to God, you may liue many sayre yeeres. It is true (quoth Cole) if it please God: & I trust this writing cannot shorten my daies: but let me see, haue I made a will? so he I promise you, I do verily purpose to write a letter

## The pleasant History

letter: notwithstanding, I haue written that that God put in to my mind: but luke once againe my Dadd, is it not written there, that Dove shall haue two hundred pounds, to be paid when he comes to demand it: yes indeed, said his Dadd: What then all is well, said Cole, & it shall goe as it is for me. I will not besto to the new writing thereof any more.

Then folding it vp, he sealed it, desiring that his Dadd would send it to Peter: he promised that he would, notwithstanding Cole was not satisfied: but after some pause, he would needs hire one to carry it. And so sitting downe softly in his chaire againe, upon a sudden he burst forth a weeping, they demanding the cause thereof, he spake as followeth:

As for cause of these teares I know: but it comes now into my mind (said Cole) when I set toward this my last journey to London, how my daughter took on, what a cople she kept to haue me stay: and I could not be rid of the little baggage a long time, she did so hang about me: when her mother by violence took her away, she cries out most mainly, O my father, my father, I shall neuer see him againe.

Alas, pretty soule, said his Daddesse, this was but childishness: nelle in the girl, and it seemeth she is very fond of you. But alas, why should you grieve at this? you must consider that it was but childishnesse. I, it is indeed, said Cole, and with that he began to nod. Then they asked him if he would goe to bed. No, said he, although I am heavy I haue no mind to goe to bed at all. With that certaine musicians of the towne came to the chamber, and knowing what Cole was there, they too out their instruments, and very solemnly began to play.

His musicke comes very well (said Cole) and when he had listened a while therunto, he said, we thinke these instruments sound like the ring of St. Mary Overies bells, but the Base is lowne all the rest; & in my eare it goes like a bell that rings a forsworne knell, for Gods sake let them haue off, and heare them this simple reuarr. The musicians being gone, his Dadd asked if now it would please him to go to bed, for (quoth he) it is twelue ereen of the clocke.

With that Cole beholding his Dadd & Daddesse earnestly, began to start backe, saying, what aile you to looke so like pale death?

of Thomas of Reading.

death: god Lord, what haue you done, that your hands are  
 thus bloody: what my hands, said his Wastell by, you may see  
 they are neither bloody nor soule: either your eyes do greatly  
 deceiue, or else fancies of a troubled minde doe delude you.

Alas, my Wastell, you may see, sayd he, how weake my wits  
 are, I neuer had my head so idle before. Come, let me drinke  
 once more, and then I will to bed, and trouble you no longer.  
 Wisth that he made himselfe vnruly, and his Wastell was  
 very diligent to warme a kerchiefe, and put it about his head.  
 God Lord, sayd he, I am not sicke, I praise God, but such an  
 alteration I find in my selfe as I neuer did before.

Wisth that the scritch-owle cried piteously. and anon after  
 the night-raven sate cawking hard by his window. Iesu haue  
 mercy vpon me, quoth he, what an ill-fauoured cry doe yonder  
 carrion birds make, and therewithall he laid him downe in his  
 bed, from whence he neuer rose againe.

His Wastell and Wastell, that all this while noted his troubled  
 mind, began to commune betwixt themselves thereof. And  
 the man said, he knew not what were best to be done. By  
 my consent (quoth he) the matter should passe, for I thinke  
 it is not best to meddle on him. What man (quoth she) saide  
 you no: haue you done so many and do you thinke at this?  
 Then shewing him a great deale of gold which Cole had left  
 with her, she said, Would it not grieve a bodiles heart to lose  
 this: haue the old churle, what should he doe liuing any long-  
 er: he hath too much, and we haue too little: but husband, let  
 the thing be done, and this is our owne.

Her wicked counsell was followed, and when they had list-  
 ned at his chamber doore, they heard the man found asleep:  
 All is safe, quoth they, and downe into the kitchen they goe  
 their seruants being all in bed, and pulling out the yron pins,  
 downe sell the bed, and the man dropt out into the boyling  
 chaldron. He being dead, they betwixt them cast his body into  
 the stuer, his clothes they made away, & made all things as it  
 should be: but when he came to the stable to conuey thence  
 Coles horse, the stable doore being open, the horse had got  
 loose, and with a part of the halter about his necke, and strait

## The pleasant Historie

thrust under his belly, as the Dilliers had bestowed him one  
 he was gone out at the back side, which led into a great field  
 leading to the house, and so leaping vnder hedges, being a lin-  
 tie about horse, had got into a ground where a spaw was gra-  
 sing, with whom he kept such a copie, that they got into the  
 high way, where one of the Towne meeting them, knew the  
 spaw, & brought her and the horse to the man that owed her.  
 In the meane space, the Dilliers had bene at the Ynne,  
 and in requittall of their euening gift, they intended to giue  
 Cole some muske in the morning. The good-man told them  
 he took horse before day: likewise there was a guest in the  
 house that would haue boze him company to Meading, vnto  
 whom the Dill also answered, that he himselfe let him vpon  
 horse-backe, and that he went long agoe. Anon came the man  
 that owed the spaw, inquiring vp and downe, to know and  
 if none of them mist a horse, who said no. At the last he  
 came to the signe of the Crane where Cole lay, and calling  
 the Dilliers, he demanded of them if they lacked none, they sayd  
 no: VVhich then sayd the man, I perceiue my spaw is good for  
 something, so: if I send her to field single, she will come home  
 double: thus it passed on all that day and the night following.  
 But the next day after, Coles wife missing that her husband  
 came not home, sent one of her men on horse-backe, to see if he  
 could find him: and if (quoth she) you meet him not betwixt  
 this and Colebroke, aske for him at the Crane, but if you find  
 him not there, then ride to London: so: I doubt he is either  
 sick, or else some mischance hath fallen vnto him.

The fellow to this, and asking for him at Colebroke, they  
 answered, he went homeward from thence such a day. The  
 seruant missing what should become of his master, and ma-  
 king much inquiry in the Towne for him: at length one told  
 him of a horse that was found on the high-way, and no man  
 knew whence he came. He going to see the horse, knew him  
 presently, and to the Crane he goes with him. The Dill of  
 the house perceiuing this, was blanke, and that night sent se-  
 cretly away. The fellow going vnto the Iustice desired his  
 helpe: presently after, who was brought that Jarman of the  
Crane

## of Thomas of Reading.

Cole was gone, & all the men said, he had sure made Cole a knave: & the officers said what Jarman said to them, when they would have given Cole much. When the woman being apprehended & examined, confessed the truth, Jarman sent after was taken in the two for forrest, he and his wife were both hang'd, after they had late open all these things before eyes. Also he confessed, that hee being a Carpenter made that false sailing sawe, and how his wife devised it. And how they had murdered by that means 15. persons. And yet not withstanding all the money which they had gotten thereby, they prospered not, but at their death were found very late in debt.

When the King heard of this murder, he was for the space of vii. daies so sorrowfull and heauy, as he would not heare any suite, giving also commandement, that the house should quite be consumed with fire, wherein Cole was murdered, and that no man should build upon that cursed ground.

Coles substance at his death was exceeding great, he had daily in his house an hundred men servants, and 21. maides, he maintained besides about two or three hundred people, spinners and carders, and a great many other house-holders. His wife neuer after married, and at her death she bestowed a mighty summe of money toward the maintaining of the new builded monastery. Her daughter was most richly married to a Gentleman of great worship, by whom she had many children. And some say, that the river wherinto Cole was cast, did ever since carry the name of Cole, being called, The river of Cole, and the Towne of Colebroke.

How diuers of the Clothiers wives went to the Churching of *Suttons* wife of Salisbury, & of their merriment. Ch. 13

**S**uttons wife of Salisbury which had lately bin deliuered of a sonne, against her going to Church, prepared great cheere: at what time *Simons* wife of Southampton came thither, and so did diuers others of the Clothiers wives, onely to make merry at this Churching feast: and to drink these Dames late at the Table, Crab, Weasell, and Wren, waited on the way, and as the old Proverbs speaketh, many women



## The pleasant History

Women many wayes, so fall it out at that time: so; there was such prattling that it lasted: Some talked of their husbands, of their wives, some of their maids, of their children, of their neighbours, some of their clothes of their garments, some told many tales of their neighbours: and to be briefe, there was none of them but would haue talked so; a whole day.

But when Crab, Weasell, and Wren saw this, they concluded betwixt themselves, that as oft as any of the women had a good bit of meate on their trenchers, they offering a cleane one, should catch that commodity, and so they did, but the women being busie in talke, marked it not, till at the last one found leisure to misse her meate: whereupon she said, that their holypnesse excluded their diligence. Not so, so; saith, said Weasell, there is an hundred holder than we. Name me one, says the woman if you can. A Hen is holder, quoth Crabbe. How will you proue that, said the woman: Because, quoth he, they will creepe vnder your coates, where we dare not come, and now & then bite you by the buttocks, as if they were by a wone. But what becomes of them, quoth the woman: their sweet meate hath so wize sauce, and their lustines doth often cost them their lives, therefore take heed. A good warning of a faire woman, said Wren, but I had not thought so fine a wit in a fat belly.

The women seeing their men so merry, said it was a signe they was good ale in the house. Whats as it so; a Churching, quoth Weasell, as a cudgell so; a curt queane. Thus with pleasant communication and merry quips they vjourn out the time, till the fruit and spice cakes were set on the board: At what time one of them began to aske the other, if they heard not of the cruell murder of Thomas of Reading: What, said the rest, as old Cole married: when I pray you was the deed done: The other answered, on Friday last: O good Lord, said the woman, how was it done, can you tell?

As report goes, said the other, he was rooked alive. O pittifull! was hee rooked: Indeed I heard one say, a man was murdered at London, and that he was sodden at an Inholders house, and serued it to the guests in Ward of Worke.

No neighbour, it was not at London, said another: I heare say



of Thomas of Reading.

say thus coming from London into a place called Coleby in  
and it is reported for truth, that the yokholder made ples of  
him, and penyng possesyon, and made his owne servant call  
a peice of him. But I pray you good neighbours, can you tell  
how it was knowne: some say, that a horse revealed it.

So to by the masse (quoth Graceswills) it is told one of  
my neighbours, that a certaine horse did speake, and told great  
things. That sounds like a lie, said one of them. Wherby said  
another, may not a horse speake, as well as Balaams ass: yet  
may be, but it is unlikely, said the thero. But where was the  
horse when he spake: As some say, quoth he, he was in the field  
and had broke out of the stable, where he stood fast locked in  
mighty strong yron letters, which he burst in pices, as they  
had bene straws, and broke downe the stable doore, and so  
got away. The good-man comming to at these speeches, as-  
ked what that was they talkt of. Harry, said his wife, we  
heare that Cole of Reading is murdered: I pray you is it true  
I, said Sutton, it is true, that this villain his Oath murder-  
ed him in whose house the man had spent many a pound: but  
did they make ples of him, said his wife: No, no, quoth her  
husband, he was scalded to death in a boiling caldron, and af-  
terwards throwne into a running river that to hard by. But  
good husband, how was it knowne: By his horse, quoth he.  
What, did he tell his master was murdered: could the horse  
speake English: Yes, what a foolish woman are you, quoth  
he, to aske such a question: but to end this, you are all heartily  
welcome, good neighbours, and I am sorry you had no better  
chance. So with thanks the women departed. Thus haue ye  
heard the diuers tales that will beseyge aboynd of an euill deed.

How Duke Robert deceiued his keepers, and got from them  
how he met faire Margaret and in carying her away, was  
taken for the which he had his eyes put out. Chap. 13.

**D**uke Robert, hauing, as you heard, obtained the loue of  
faire Margaret, did now cast in his mind, how he might  
delude his keepers, and carry her quite away. In the end he  
being absolutely resolved what to doe, sent his letter unto  
her,

## The pleasant History

her, wherein he requested, that she would be ready to meet him in the Forest, betwixt Cardiffe and Gloucestre.

The young Lady having secretly received his message, unknown to her mother or some, in a morning betime made her ready and got forth, walking to the appointed place, where her Love should meet her.

During her absence there, and thinking long ere her Love came, she entred into divers passions, which indeed presaged some misfortune to follow. O my deare Love, said she, how slow art thou in performing thy promise! to by doe not thy words agree with thy inditing & he, these are thy words, Come my deare Margaret, and with Cupids swift wings flye to thy friend, be swift as nimble in thy coming, as the Camels of Bactria, that runne an hundred miles a day, I will waite and stay for thee, so I stay not so long. There is no Country like Asinia for nimbling horses, & to carry this I have got one.

O my Love (quoth she) here am I, but where art thou? O why dost thou play & truant with time, who like the wild stives alway vnto an ambling gonnert of his paine is to slow to serve our turnes. A flying horse for flying Lovers were most meete. And thus casting many looks those in the still-  
tane shades, by an adone to aspie him, she thought every minute an houre, till she might see him. Sometimes she would wish her selfe a bird, that she might flye through the ayre to meet him, as a pretty squirrel to climb the highest tree to descry his coming: but finding her wishes void, she began thus to excuse him, and perswaded her selfe saying:

How much to blame am I, to find fault with my friend & Alas, men that lacke their liberty, must come when they can, not when they would, poore prisoners cannot doe what they desire, and then why should I be so hasty? Therefore if safely I may lay me to sleepe, I will beguile vnquiet thoughts with quiet sleepe: it is said that Galina breeds no serpents, nor doth Englande forestes nourish Beares or Lyons, therefore without hurt I hope I may rest a while. Thus leaning faire Margaret in a sweet slumber, he will returne to Duke Robert, who had thus plotted his escape from his keepers.

Hunting

## of Thomas of Reading.

Hauing liberty of the King to hoke and hunt, he determined on a date as her month followe the chase, to loose the bounds to the hart, and the hunters to their homes, and being busse in their sport, himselfe would flie, which he performed at that time when he appointed Margaret, to make him, and so coming to the place, his horse all in a water, & himselfe in a sweat, knowing his Loue asleepe, he awoke her with a kisse, saying, a like faire Margaret, now comes the time where in thou shalt be made a Queene: and presently setting her on horsebacke, he posted away.

Now when the keepers saw they had lost his company, and that at the killing of the game, hee was not present they were among themselves in such a musing that they were ready one to stabbe another. It was the fault, saie one, that hee thus escapt from vs, that hadde more mind of thy pleasure, then of thy prisoner, and by this meanes we are all vndone. The other saie as much to him, that he had thought he had followed him in the chase: but leaning at last this contention, the one posted up to the King, while the others coasted up and downe the Country to search for the duke, who hauing killd his horse in travelling, was most unhappily metta on foot with faire Margaret, ere he could come to any towne where he might for money haue another. But whi he espyed his keepers come to take him, he desired Margaret to make shift for her selfe, & to seeke to escape them, But the being of a contrary mind, saie, she would lue and die with him.

The Duke seeing himselfe ready to be surprized, dzew out his sword, and saie he would buy his liberty with his life, because he would yield any more to be a prisoner, and thereupon began a great fight betwixt them insomuch that the duke had killed two of them: but himselfe being sore wounded, & faint with over much bleeding, at length fell downe, being not able any longer to stand: and by this meanes the good Duke was taken with his faire loue, & both of them committed to prison.

But in the meane space, when Grayes wife had misse her maske, and saw she was quite gone, she made great lamentation for her among her neighbours, for she loued her as dearly

## The pleasant History

as any child that euer the bare of her stone body. O Margarec (quoth she) what cause hadst thou thus to leane me: If thou dost mislike of any thing, why dost not thou tell me: If thy wages were too little, I would haue mended it: If thy apparell had bene too simple, thou shouldst haue had better: If thy worke had bin too great, I would haue had helpe for ther.

Farewell my sweet Meg, the best seruant that euer came in my mans house, many may I haue of thy name, but neuer any of thy nature, thy diligence is much, in thy hands I laid the whole gouernment of my house, and thereby saved my selfe of that care, which now will trouble me.

Here she hath left me my keyes vnto my chestes, but my comfort is gone with her presence, every gentle word that she was wont to speake, comes now into my mind, her courteous behaviour shall I neuer forget: With both sweet and modest a countenance would she qualifie my ouer hasty nature: It repents my heart that ere I spoke soule word vnto her. O Meg, wert thou here againe, I would neuer chide thee more: but I was an vnwoorthy Dame for such a seruant: What will become of me now, if I should chance to be sick, seeing she is gone, that was wont to be both my Apothecary and Physicke.

Tell quoth her neighbours there is no remedy now but to rest content, you shall one day heare of her doubt you not, and thinke this, that she was not so good, but you may get another as good, and therefore doe not take it so heauily. O neighbour, blame me not for grieue, seeing I haue lost so great a iewel, and sure I am perswaded, that scant in a bodys life time they shall meete with the like.

I protest I would circut England round about on my bare feete to meete with her againe. O, my Meg was surely stole away from me, els would she not haue gone in such sort. Her husband on the other side grieued as much, a restless night nor day riding vp and downe to finde her: but the worse soule, is fast lockt vp in prison, and therefore cannot be met withall.

But when the King vnderstand of his brothers escape, hee was maruelous wroth, giuing great charge and comendement when he was taken, that both his eyes should be put out

and

and be kept in prison till his dying day; appointing also that the Maid should lose her life for presumption of loving him.

This matter being rumored over all England, it came to the eares of Gray & his wife, who hearing that Margaret also was there in prison appointed to die, the good aged woman neuer rested till she came to y<sup>e</sup> Court, where kneeling before the King with many teares she besought his Majesty to spare the Maidens life, saying, most royall King consider, I humbly beseech you, that y<sup>e</sup> Duke your brother was able to iustice any woman to his loue: much moze a silly Maiden especially promising her marriage, to make her a Lady, a Dutchesse, or a Queene, who would refuse such an offer, when at the instant they might get both a princely husband and a high dignity: If death be a Louers gherown, then what is due to hatred? I am in my heart perswaded, that had my poore Margaret thought it would haue byed your highnes displeasure, she would neuer haue bought his loue so deare: had your grace made it known to your Commons, that it was unlawfull for any to marry the Duke your brother, who would haue attempted such an action if she had wilfully disobeyed your Graces commandement, she might haue bene thought worthy of death; but being ignorantly she offended, I beseech your Grace to recall the sentence, and let me still enjoy my seruant for neuer will I rise, till your Majesty haue granted my petition.

This highnes, who was of nature mercifull, beholding the womans abundant teares, took pittie on her, and granted her sute: which being obtained, she went home in all haste possible. And from thence, she with her husband taking thei<sup>r</sup> iourney to Carlist castle, they came at that very instant when the Maiden was led toward her death, who went in most sorrowfull sort to the same, saying, that they were not worthy to be accounted true louers: that were not willing to die for loue: and so with a smiling countenance she passed on, as if she had eaten Apom Rills, which causeth a man to die laughing: but her Dame Gray taking her, tell about her necke, and with many kisses embraced her, saying, Thou shalt not die my wench, but goe home with me; and so, thy veltuery, behold here she

## The pleasant Historie

Kings letters; and with that she deliuered them by to the gouernour of the Castle: who reading them found these wordes written: *We pardon the Spades life, and grant her liberty, but let her not passe, till she see her louers eyes put out, which we will haue you doe in such sort, that only the sight may perishe, but the eye continue faire, for which cause I haue sent doctore Doctor Piero, that he may execute the same.*

The Gouernour of the Castle hauing read the Kings letter, said thus to the Spaden: The Kings Maestie hath pardoned thy life, and allowed thee liberty: but you must not passe before you see your Louers eyes put out. *O* Sir, said the Spaden, mistake not your selfe, they are my eyes that must be put out, and not the Dukes: as his offence grew by my meanes, so I being guilty, ought to receiue the punishment.

The Kings commandement must be fulfilled, said the Gouernour: and therewithall Duke Robert was brought forth, who hearing that he must lose his eyes, said thus: The noble minde is neuer conquered by griefe, nor overcome by mischance: but as the hart reneweth his age by eating the Serpents, so both a man lengthen his life with deuouring sorrow: my eyes haue offended the King, and they must be punished, my heart is in as great fault, why is not that killed?

The Kings Maestie, said the Gouernour, spares your life of more loue, and onely is content to satisfie the Law with the losse of your eyes, wherfore take in good part this punishment and thinke you haue deserued greater than is granted.

With this Margaret cryed out, saying, *O* my deare Love, most gentle Prince, well may you wish that I had neuer bin borne, who by seeing of me must lose your sight: but haply should I count my selfe, if it so please the King, that I might redeeme thy eyes with my life: or else, that being an equall offender, I might receiue equall punishment: hadst thou sustained this smart for some Queens Maiesties offence of high blood, it might with the more ease be borne, but to indure it for such a one as I, it must needs cause a treble griefe to be increased.

Content thee, faire Margaret, said the Duke: for honour ought to be giuen for vertue, not for riches: for glorie, honour, nobility

and



of Thomas of Reading.

and riches without vertue, are but clothes of malitiousnes. And now let me take my leaues of thy beauty, for neuer must I behold thy face: notwithstanding I account my eyes well lost, in that I doe forget them for so perles a paragon. How faire heauens fare well, the Sunne, Moone, and Starres shall I in this world neuer behold againe, and farewell also the fruitfull earth: well may I leaue thee, but those peere windows of my body are now denyed to view thee any moze: and though the world hath euer bin my foe, yet will I bid thee farewell too, & farewell all my friends: whilst I live here in this world, I must suppose to sleepe, & wake when I come in heauen, where I hope to see you all againe. Yet had it pleased the King, I had rather haue lost my life than my eyes. Alas, why, what is it but a flowze, a bubble in the water, a spanne long, and full of miserie: of such small account is life, that euery souldier will sell it for six pence. And trust me, I doe now detest life, worse than a goat doth hate Basill.

With that the Doctor prepared his instrument, and being ready to set to the Dukes eyes, he said, O stay master Doctor, till I haue conueyed my Louers countenance downe into my heart: Come hither my sweet, and let me giue thee my last kisse, while mine eyes may direct me to thy cherry lip. When embracing her in his armes, he said, O that I might giue thee a kisse of xx. yerres long, & to satisfie my greedy eyes with thy sight: yet it doth somewhat content me, because thou art present at my punishment, that I may hold thee by the hand, to comfort my heart, at the sudden prick of my eye.

This being said, the Doctor perfozmed his duty, and so put out the chifftall sight: at what time D. Robert started vp, and with a most manly courage said, I must thanke his grace. Alas, that though he deprieth me of my sight, yet he leaueth me eyes to weepe for my sinnes. But so soone as Margaret beheld the deed, she fell downe in a swoone, and much adoe her dame had to recouer her life: which when the Duke vnderstood he was wondrous woe, groping for hers with his blinding eyes, saying, O where is my loue, for God sake haue regard to her. And I pray you most heartily, god god-wife Gray, le-

## The pleasant History

her haue this fauour for my sake, that she may be vsed kindly. And with that she depereled him into the Castle, and Margaret was carried away wondrously. Thomas alibut her damme was most tender oner her; and would suffer her to lacke nothing. When she was somewhat well recovered, her Dame Gray set her on horsebacke: and at her comming to Gloucester there was no small ioy.

How Thomas Done being fallen to decay, was forsaken of his friends, & despised of his seruants: and how in the end he was raised againe through the liberaliey of the Clothiers.

Chap. 14

**S**uch as like the pleasure of the world, follow a shadow to wher in is no substance: and as the adder Aspis tickleth a man to death, so doth vaine pleasure flatter vs, till it makes vs forget God, and consume our substance, as by Tom Done it is apparent, who had through a free heart, and a liberall minde wasted his wealth, and looke how his goods consumed, so his friends fled from him: And alibest he had bene of great ability, and thereby done good vnto many, yet not a man regarded him in his pouerty, but casting a scornfull countenance vpon him, they passed by him with slender salutation: neither would any of his former acquaintance do him good or pleasure but in the value of a farthing; his former friendship done to them was quite forgot, and he made of as much account, as Job when he sate on the dunghill.

Now, when his wicked seruants saw him in this disgrace with the world: they on the other side began to disdain him. Notwithstanding that he (to his great cost) had long time sought them by, yet did they nothing regard it, but behinde his back in most scornfull sort derided him, and both in their words and actions greatly abused him, reuerence they would doe none vnto him, but when they spake, it was in such malapert sort, as would grieue an honest minde to heare it.

At last it came to passe, that breaking out into more contempt, they said they would stay no longer with him, and that it was a great offered to them, to serue a person so beggerly: where.

whereupon they thought it conuenient to saue for their benefit elsewhere. When the distressed man found the matter so plaine, being in great greifesse spake thus vnto them How do I And, to my sorrow, the small trust that is in this false world Why, my masters (quoth he) haue you so much forgotten my former prosperitie, that you nothing regard my present necessity: in your wants I forsake you not, in your sickness I left you not, nor despised you in your great poverty: it is not unknowne, though you doe not consider it, that I toke some of you vp in the high way, other some from your nedy parents, & brought the rest from mere beggerie to a house of bounty; where from paltrie boyes, I brought you vp to mans estate, & haue to my great cost, taught you a trade, whereby you may liue like men. And in requittall of all my courtesie, cost and good will, will you now on a sudden forsake me: is this the best recompence that you can And in your hearts to yeeld me:

This is farre from the minds of honest seruants. The fierce Lion is kind to those that doe him good, plucke but one thorne out of his foot, and for the same he will shew manifold thanks. The wild Bull will not overthrow his dam: and the very Dragons are dutifull to their nourishers. We better aduised call to mind, I beseech you, that I haue not pluckt a thorne out of your side, but dyallone your whole bodies out of perils, when you had no meanes to helpe your selues, I onely was your support, and he, that when al other forsake you, did comfort you in all your extremities.

And what of all this, quoth one of them: because you toke vs by poore, doth it therefore follow, that we must be your slaues: We are young men, and for our part, we are no further to regard your profit, then it may stand with our preferment: Why should we lose our benefit to pleasure you: if you taught vs our trade, and brought vs by from holes to men, you had our seruice for it, whereby you made no small benefit, if you had as well used it, as we got it. But if you be poore you may thanke your selfe, being a iust scourge for your prodigallitie, and it is my opinion plaine, that to stay with you, is the next way to make vs like you, neither able to help our selues

## The pleasant History

no; our friends: therefore in blyesse come pay me my wages, for I will not stay, let the rest doe as they will, for I am resolued.

Well said his spawler, it needs thou wilt be gone, here is part of thy wages in hand, & the rest as soon as God send it, thou shalt haue it: & with that, turning to the rest, he said, Let me yet intreat you to stay, and leaue me not altogether destitute of helpe: by your labour must I liue, and without you I knowe not what to doe. Consider therefore my need, and regard my great charge. And if for my sake you will do nothing, take compassion of my poore children: stay my sitting spot, and let me not bitterly fall, through your flying from me.

Thus (quoth they) what do you talke to vs: we can haue better wages, and serue a man of credit, where our care shall be farre better, & our gaires greater: therefore the world might count vs right copcombs, if wee should forsake our profit, to pleasure you: therefore adieu, God send you more money, for you are like to haue no more men: and thus they departed.

When they were gone, with in a while after they met one with another, saying, What cheare: are you all come away in faith I, what should we doe else, quoth they: but hear it thou sirra, hast thou got thy wages: Not yet saith the other, but I shall haue it, and that is as good, tis but x. shillings. Wilt thou so (said he) now I see thou art one of Gods Almightyes tolets: Why so, said the other: Because (quoth he) thou wilt be fed with shales: but I'll tell thee one thing, 'twas better for thee quickly to arrest him, lest some other doe it before, and there be nothing left to pay thy debt: hold thy peace, faire words make soles sauer, and it is an old saying, One bird in hand is worth two in bush: if thou dost not arrest him presently, I will not giue thee two pence for thy x. shillings. How shall I come by him, quoth the other: giue me but two pots of ale, and I'll betray him, said he. So they being agreed this time. h. sae's Judas comes to his late master, and told him that a friend of his at the doore would speake with him. The distrustful man thinking no enill, went to the doore, where presently an Officer arrested him at his mans suite.

The poore man seeing this, being stricke into a sudden sor-

row.

row, in the griefe of his heart spake to this effect: Ah thou  
 is too fellow, art thou the first man that seeks to augment my  
 miserie? Haue I thus long giuen thee bread, to bread my o-  
 uerthrow: and nourisht thee in thy need, to worke my de-  
 struction? Full little did I thinke, when thou so often diddest  
 dip thy false fingers in my dish, that I gaue food to my chel-  
 lest foe: but what base complaints in these extremes: Goe  
 wife, quoth he, vnto my neighbours, and see if thou canst get  
 any of them to be my basle. But in vaine was her paines  
 spent. Then he sent to his kinsfolkes, and they denied him:  
 to his brother and he would not come at him, so that there was  
 no shift, but to prison he must: but as he was going, a mes-  
 senger met him with a letter from Maister Cole, wherein as  
 you heard, hee had promised him two hundred pounds: which  
 when the poore man read, hee greatly reioyced, and the wing  
 the same to the Officer, hee was content to take his owne  
 word. Whereupon Tom Doue went presently to Reading,  
 where at his coming, he found all the rest of the Clothiers,  
 lamenting Coles vntimely death, where the wofull wofodow  
 paid him the mony, by which deed all the rest of the Clothiers  
 were induced to doe some thing for Doue. And thereupon one  
 gaue him ten pounds, another twenty, another thirtie pounds,  
 to begin the world anew: and by this meanes (together with  
 the blessing of God) he grew into greater credit then euer hee  
 was before. And riches being thus come vpon him, his former  
 friends came saluting vnto him, and when hee had no need of  
 them, then euery one was ready to proffer him kindnesse.  
 His wicked seruants also that disordered him in his distresse,  
 were after glad to come creeping vnto him, intreating with  
 cap and knee for his fauour and friendship. And albeit hee  
 seemed to forgive their trespasses done against him, yet hee  
 would often say, he would neuer trust them for a straw. And  
 thus he euer after liued in great wealth and prosperity, doing  
 much good to the poore, and at his death, left to his childe ten  
 great lands.

## The pleasant Historie

How faire *Margaret* made her estate and high birth knowne to her Master and Dame: & for the intire loue she bore to Duke *Robert*, made a vow neuer to marry, but became a Nun in the Abbey at Gloucester. Chap. 15.

**A**fter faire *Margaret* was come againe to Gloucester, neuer did she behold the cleare day, but with a weeping eye: and so great was the sorow which she conceived for the losse of Duke *Robert* her faithfull Louer, that she utterly despised all the pleasures of this life, and at last bewrayed her selfe in this sort vnto her Dame:

My good Master and Dame, too long haue I dissembled my parentage from you, whom the froward destinies do pursue to deserued punishment. The wofull daughter am I of the vnhappy Earle of *Shrewsburie*, who euer since his banishment, haue done nothing but drawne mischance after mee: wherefore let me intreat you (deare Master and Dame) to haue your good-wills, to spend the remnant of my life in some blessed Monasterie.

When *Gray* and his wife heard this, they wondred greatly, as well at her birth, as at her strange demand. Whereupon her Dame knew not how to call her, whether *Madam* or *Madam*, but said, O good Lord are you a Ladie, and I knowe it not: I am soze that I knewe it not before. But when the folks of the house heard that *Margaret* was a Ladie, there was no small alteration: & mozeouer her Dame said, that she had thought to haue had a match betwene her & her son: and by many perswasions did seeke to witt drawe her from being a Nun, saying in this manner: What *Margaret* thou art young and faire, she world (no doubt) hath better fortune for thee whereby thou maist leaue an honourable issue behind thee, in whom thou mayst liue after death.

These and many other reasons did they alledge vnto her, but all in vaine: she making this reply, Who knowes not that this world giueth the pleasure of an houre, but the sorow of many daies: so: it pisseth euer that which it promisseth, which is nothing else but continuall trouble & vexation of the mind. Do you thinke, if I had the offer & choice of the mightiest Princes



## of Thomas of Reading.

res of Chyftendom. that I could match my self better then to my Lord Iesus: So no bee is my husband, to whom I yeld my self both body and soule, giuing to him my heart, my lone and my most firme affection: I haue ouerlong loued this vile world: therefore I beseech you farther dissuade me not.

When her friends by no meanes could alter her opinion, the matter was made knowne to his Maiesty, who against the time that she should be receiued into the Monasterie, came to Gloucester with most part of his Nobilitie, to honour her action with his princely presence.

All things being therefore prepared, the young Lady was in most princely wise attired in a gowne of pure white sattin, her kirtle of the same, embroidered with gold about the skirts in most curious sort, her head was garnished with gold, pearls, and precious stones, hauing her hair like threds of burnisht gold, hanging down behind in the manner of a princely bryde about her puoy necke jewels of inestimable price were hung and her handwreists were compassed about with bracelets of bright shining Diamonds.

The Knights thow the which she should passe, were pleasantly deckt with greene saxe boughs. Then came the young Lady most like an heavenly Angel out of her masters house at what time all the bells in Gloucester were solemnly rung: she being led betwixt the Kings Maiesty hauing on his Royall Robes, & Imperiall Crowne, & the cheiffe Bishop wearing his Mitre, in a Cope of cloth of gold, ouer her head a Canopp of white silke, fringed about in princely manner: before her went an hundred Priestes singing, and after her all the chiefe Ladies of the Land: then all the waiues and waiues of Gloucester followed, with an innumerable sort of people on either side standing to behold her. In this sort she passed on te & Cathedral Church, where she was brought to the Pundy gate.

The Lady Abbess receiued her: where the beautifull maiden kneeling downe, made her prayer in sight of all the people then with her owne hands she vndid her virgin faire gowne and toke it off, and gaue it away to the poore: after that, her kirtle, then her jewels, bracelets and rings, saying, Farewell the pride & vanitie of this world. The ornaments of her head

## The pleasant History

were the next wee gaue away: and then was she leu on one  
kype, where she was stricken, and in stead of her smocke of soft  
silke, had a smocke of rough haire put vpon her.

Then came one with a paire of sheeres, and cut off her gol-  
den coloured lockes, & with dust and ashes all bestrewn her  
head and face, which being done, she was brought again into  
the peoples sight bare foot & bare leg'd, to whom she said: so  
farewell the world, farewell the pleasures of this life, farewell  
my Lord the King, & to the Duke of Bedfords lone farewell, now  
shall my eyes weepe for my former transgressions, & no more  
shall my tongue talke of vanity: farewell my good father and  
Dame and farewell all good people.

With which words she was taken away, and neuer after  
sawne aboue. When Duke Robert heard thereof, he desired  
that at his death, his body might be buried in Gloucester: in  
that Towne, quoth he, where first my cleare eyes beheld the  
heavenly beauty of my lone, & where for my sake shee for-  
sooke the world: which was performed accordingly.

The King also at his death requested to be buried at Ken-  
ding, for the great lone he bare to that place, among those  
Cloisters, who liuing were his hearts comfort. Gray dying  
wondrous wealthy, gaue land to the Monasterie whereinto  
Margaret was take. William Fitzallen also dyed a most rich  
man having builded many houses for the poore, whose sonne  
Henry after was the first Shier that was euer in London.

Simon of Salisbary dyd also at his death much good, and  
gaue an hundred li. to be yearly lent to poore weaners of the  
Towne, to the worlds end. Simon of South-hampton gaue a  
most counteous gift toward the building of a monastery at  
Winchester. Hodgekins of Wallstar dyd also great good, & so  
did Cuthbert of Kendall, who had married xxiij. complex-out of  
his owne house, giuing each of them xli. to begine the world  
withall. Martin Brian of Gloucester gaue toward the build-  
ing of a fre school in Winchester, & great masse of money.  
And thus (gentle Reader) haue I finished my story of these  
worthy men, desiring thee to take my paines in good part,  
which will ingage me to greater matters, perceiving this  
courteously accepted.

FINIS.